

# LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

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## A POET'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

"He dieth young whom the gods love," was said

By Greek Menander; nor alone by one  
Who gave to Greece his English song and sword

Re-echoed is the saying, but likewise he  
"Who uttered nothing base," and from whose brow,

By right divine, the laurel lapsed to yours, —  
Great sire, great successor, — in verse confirmed

The avowal of "the Morning Star of Song,"  
Happiest is he that dieth in his flower.\*

Yet can it be that it is gain, not loss,  
To quit the pageant of this life before  
The heart hath learnt its meaning; leave half-

seen,  
Half-seen, half-felt, and not yet understood,  
The beauty and the bounty of the world;

The fertile waywardness of wanton Spring,  
Summer's deep calm, the modulated joy  
Of Autumn conscious of a task fulfilled,

And home-abiding Winter's pregnant sleep,  
The secret of the seasons? Gain, to leave  
The depths of love unfathomed, its heights

unscaled,  
Rapture and woe unreconciled, and pain  
Unprized, unapprehended? This is loss,

Loss and not gain, sheer forfeiture of good,  
Is banishment from Eden, though its fruit  
Remains untasted.

Interfered then the oracle, "He dies young  
Whom the gods love," for song infallible  
Hath so pronounced! . . . Thus I interpret it;

The favorites of the gods die young, for they,  
They grow not old with grief and deadening  
time,

But still keep April's moisture in their heart,  
May's music in their ears. Their voice re-

vives,  
Revives, rejuvenates, the wintry world,  
Flushes the veins of gnarled and knotted age,  
And crowns the majesty of life with leaves

As green as are the sapling's.

Thrice happy poet! to have thus renewed  
Your youth with wisdom, — who, though life  
still seems

To your fresh gaze as frolic and as fair  
As in the callow season when your heart  
Was but the haunt and pairing-place and nest

\* *ὅν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος.*

MENANDER.

Whom the Gods love die young was said of yore,  
And many deaths do they escape by this:  
The death of friends, and that which slays even more,  
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,  
Except mere breath.

(Don Juan, Canto iv., s. 12.)

The good die first,  
But they whose hearts are dry as summer dust  
Bury n to the socket.

(The Excursion, Book I.)

And certainly a man hath most honour,  
To dien in his excellence and flower.

(CHAUCER, The Knight's Tale.)

Of nightingale and cuckoo, have enriched  
Joy's inexperienced warblings with the note  
Of mature music, and whose mellow mind,  
Laden with life's sustaining lessons, still  
Gleams bright with hope; even as I saw, to-

day,  
An April rainbow span the August corn.

Long may your green maturity maintain  
Its universal season; and your voice,  
A household sound, be heard about our  
hearths,

Now as a Christmas carol, now as the glee  
Of vernal Maypole, now as harvest song.  
And when, like light withdrawn from earth to  
heaven,

Your glorious gloaming fades into the sky,  
We, looking upward, shall behold you there,  
Shining amid the young unaging stars.

ALFRED AUSTIN.

August 6th, 1889.

Spectator.

WE have no words with which to tell  
The truths that others teach,  
And scarcely one would hearken well  
Unto our childish speech.

Yet day by day, if we should try  
To do the things we know,  
The wisest that should pass us by  
Might wiser, holier grow.

Our Saviour Christ a lesson taught,  
From lilies in the grass;  
From little birds that quick as thought  
Amongst the branches pass.

A wise man and a holy one,  
God's blessed word should preach;  
But if by us his will be done,  
Some truth may children teach.

If when our neighbor does us wrong  
An answer kind we make,  
And bear it patiently and long,  
A lesson he may take.

And sinner thus from sinner learns  
Something that God has taught,  
And by a lamp that feebly burns  
A holier light is brought.

"Children's Hymns," by Helen Taylor.

## A SIBYLLINE LEAF.

WITH time to manhood comes this truth:  
That *not* to taste, enjoy, attain;  
Not — as in dreams we nursed in youth —  
To love and to be loved again;  
But to endure, self to control;  
To shape the void and fugitive;  
Firm, with still upward-laboring soul —  
This is to live and feel we live!

Academy.

GEORGE DOUGLAS.

From The Quarterly Review.

## THE DUKE OF COBURG'S MEMOIRS.\*

THE second volume of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg's memoirs is far more interesting than the first. Beyond the sketch of his early life and education, which derives a special importance from having been carried on conjointly with that of his brother the prince consort, the first volume is taken up with the complicated struggles for German unity, and the rivalry between Prussia and Austria, which have little attraction for any but professed students of history. The unity of Germany, so far as it has been accomplished, was eventually attained by very different methods. The fact that the duke was an actor in many of the scenes which he describes, and that he had access to the best sources of information, does not give his narrative a charm which is essentially wanting to the subject. Nor does the duke's style compensate for other defects. He is laborious, painstaking, and, we believe, honest. But his narrative is filled with a sense of his own importance which is entirely unjustified, and which is a source of irritation to the reader. The brother of the prince consort, the nephew of the king of the Belgians, the head of the most successful of the petty German houses, himself a reigning duke, can with difficulty believe that he is not a motive power in the course of events by which he is carried on. Prince Albert, dearly as he loved his brother, was quite conscious of his weaknesses; and few things are more amusing in the relations between them than the *naïveté* with which the duke publishes strictures which, although polite in form, were intended to be severe. The material of the second volume is very different. We are presented with a full history of the Crimean and Italian wars. The letters of the prince consort are numerous and important. The duke's relations to the imperial court of France were intimate and confidential. In the present article we shall attempt to omit the duke's personality as far as possible, and confine ourselves to placing before our readers

whatever new material the book contains for estimating the men and measures of these eventful years.

The volume opens with the conferences held at Dresden in the early months of 1851 for the purpose of healing the wounds caused by the treaty of Olmütz, the lowest point of Prussia's humiliation before Austria. Prince Albert writes of the European situation as follows: "The emperor Nicholas is for the moment complete master of Europe, Austria is only a tool, Prussia a dupe, France a nullity, England worse than nothing with her foreign affairs directed by an unprincipled minister." This is an instance of the writer's feeling toward Lord Palmerston, which constantly reappears throughout the narrative. The duke, who passed as a Radical among princes, on his visit to Dresden was gently rebuked by the good old king for having deserted the traditions of his house to follow the various strivings after German unity. This indeed was a time when Schwarzenberg could say of Germany what Metternich said of Italy: "Don't talk to me of Germany. It does not exist. I have lived abroad all my life as soldier and diplomatist, and have always found that no one ever heard of it." Indeed, those who remember the Exhibition of 1851 will not have forgotten that the only expression for a united Germany at that time was the outlandish name of Zollverein. Prince Albert saw clearly enough that the only hope of unity lay in the decisive action of Prussia, and that no sympathy could be expected from England. He writes on March 5, 1851:—

Our ministerial crisis has ended miserably; all parties have compromised themselves, and are now more entangled than ever. The old ministry has come back to office, much weakened, however, in Parliament. The Austrians and the Pope have succeeded in bringing England into confusion, and yet the Radical party will eventually derive the greatest advantage from what has happened. In this way Schwarzenberg digs for Europe and himself one ditch after another.

The duke, who liked to see everything with his own eyes, paid a year later a visit to the Austrian court. He was struck by the brilliant appearance and faultless tact

\* *Aus meinem Leben und aus meiner Zeit.* Von Ernst II., Herzog von Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha. Zweiter Band. Berlin: 1888.

of the young emperor; by his talents for war, for organization, and for languages; by the extent and exactness of his knowledge on all subjects. The magnificence of the court was only an outward sign of the efforts made in all directions to raise Austria to a leading position in Europe. The duke's impressions were fully reported to his brother, who replied from Osborne that the picture he had drawn caused a bad impression.

Austria wishes before everything to become a state, and as this requires time she expects Europe to wait till she has effected her object. If Europe does not object, Austria is quite justified in demanding this. The merit of the invention is not great; it is at bottom only a new application of the principle of Metternich, that Europe must stand still because Austria cannot become a state. The events of 1848 have shown that without the existence of a state there can be no cohesion between the separate parts of the monarchy; and therefore, while her internal policy is altered, her foreign policy remains the same. Yet Austria exaggerates her strength if she thinks that she can go on dictating to Europe for her own interests. She never would have attempted it if it had not been for the weakness of the King of Prussia and the enormous mistakes of Lord Palmerston. Everything is now being done to bring about an alliance between Austria and Louis Napoleon, the results of which can only be disastrous. Germany must take care of herself.

Prussia was, however, soon to enter into a new phase of activity. In May, 1851, Bismarck became first secretary of the federal legation at Frankfort. The duke, although opposed to him in politics, claims to have discerned his great qualities at an early period, whereas Prince Albert did not appreciate him. The early part of his mission was spent in silence and inactivity. To a lady who asked him in October, 1852, how it happened that when his chief Count Thun left Frankfort because a man of energy could not put up with such a lazy and aimless life, Bismarck could endure it, he replied that he had been all his days nothing but a loafing country gentleman, strolling about with his gun in his hand, and that the life at Frankfort would suit him admirably.

At this time the two most remarkable personalities at the head of European

States were the emperor Nicholas and Louis Napoleon. Both of them were intimately known by Duke Ernest. Nicholas appeared to him the most remarkable man of his age, the last real autocrat in Europe. The vague abstractions of Church, State, and nationality were lost in his personality. He seemed the embodiment of the Russian Empire, and yet to those who looked more closely there was nothing but the exterior, a mere painted picture. The whole idea of his life and reign was summed up in correctness of uniform. He could pose admirably in turn as the general and the statesman. The fascination of his courtly manners worked powerfully on men and women. His influence was everywhere and nowhere, like the wandering Jew. His ambassadors exercised a predominant influence in many European courts, and everywhere an influence opposed to freedom. England of all the great powers stood alone as the opponent of his ambition in the East. The queen and prince disliked him, and Cabinet ministers distrusted him. Yet he hoped to bring them over to his side by the bribe of the island of Candia.

Louis Napoleon was a very different character. During his residence in London he had attempted in vain to secure a footing in English society. The queen had refused to receive him. He was regarded as of no importance, and his character was shady. When he became president his two strongest enemies were Russia and England. Prince Albert not only had an aversion to Napoleonic traditions, but he disliked the man who represented them. He had never shown any desire to make his acquaintance. Even the keen interest which the president of the French republic took in the Exhibition of 1851 had no effect on Prince Albert's mind. For the moment, indeed, the attention of the English court was entirely occupied with this great idea. Many difficulties had to be overcome, and the death of Sir Robert Peel seemed an almost fatal blow. Prince Albert writes on July 4, 1850, that they are in the greatest distress.

Peel is a loss for all Europe, a terrible loss for England, an incalculable loss for the Crown



and for us personally. We are now entirely deprived of that support in Parliament and public opinion which he afforded to the throne. Parties will again run into extremes. Our Exhibition will be driven from London. The Protectionists, who fear for their interests; the Radicals, who wish to assert their property in the parks; the *Times*, whose solicitor has bought a house in Hyde Park, rage and abuse our project. The matter ought to have been decided this evening, but Peel, who had undertaken to support us, is no more. So we shall probably be beaten, and the whole Exhibition will be given up. You see that we are not exactly on a bed of roses.

These fears, however, proved to be groundless. The duke, who spent a month in England in the summer of 1851, pronounces the Exhibition far beyond all others which have succeeded it. It was the last great occasion, he says, in which the English aristocracy displayed their magnificence to the eyes of Europe. All their resources were placed at the disposal of the Exhibition. More than four thousand state carriages appeared at the opening. (?) The court kept open house. The queen and her consort stood at the height of their reputation. Prince Albert was the soul of everything.

The Exhibition closed on October 11, and in December Europe was astonished by the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon. The queen and her husband were shocked by the want of faith and the duplicity which characterized it. Lord Palmerston's hasty and imprudent approval of the step led to his dismissal from office. Prince Albert was delighted with the result. He writes to his brother at the end of the year:—

I cannot complain of the past year. The Great Exhibition passed off in an incredibly fortunate and peaceable manner, and without the slightest *contretemps*. And now the year closes with the circumstance—so fortunate for us—that the man who has embittered our whole existence, because he was always placing us in the disgraceful dilemma of either supporting his misdeeds in the whole of Europe, or of allowing the Radical party here either to grow to a power under his leadership, or to break into open war with the Crown, and thus throw into a general chaos the only country in which freedom, order, and respect for law are to be found together—has cut his own

throat. "Give a rogue rope enough, and he will hang himself," is an old English proverb. We shall certainly have trouble with Palmerston, who is furious, and also with a Reform Bill which is promised.

At the end of February, 1852, Lord Derby became prime minister. Prince Albert writes upon this: "Lord Derby is a most excellent man, but he calls his ministry himself 'the Derbyshire militia fresh from the plough, ready to be disbanded immediately.' Not one of them was ever yet in a public office. The old Duke [of Wellington] says of them, 'People one never saw or heard of before.'" It was regarded as a transitional government, and in fact it lasted but ten months, and was succeeded by the Coalition ministry. The new ruler of France soon began to make his neighbors suspicious. England called out the militia, created a marine reserve, and fortified her harbors. Stockmar, the trusted friend of Prince Albert, declared that the new emperor was utterly untrustworthy. King Leopold formed the worst opinion of his designs. He saw a new Napoleonic era approaching. He wrote to Metternich that Napoleon III. was busy day and night with preparations for placing France in the position which she had held under Napoleon I. All the powers must combine to resist him. Prince Albert writes: "We are refurbishing up our rusty cannon, building fortifications, have established a militia of eighty thousand men, are improving our arms, and are very busy." At this juncture the engagement of the emperor to Mademoiselle de Montijo was announced. She had been introduced to her future husband at a ball given at the Elysée. The emperor was attempting to establish an alliance with a royal or a semi-royal house. On receiving the last refusal he said to the American gentleman who had introduced her, "I will have no more of these princesses. I will marry your American." "She is not an American," replied his friend, "she is a Spaniard." "Never mind," said the emperor, "she is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life, and I will marry her." Suspicion of France was coincident with a rising enthusiasm for Italy. Prince

Albert had been early indoctrinated with the aspirations for Italian unity. He had written to King Leopold years before: "If you wish to see how far reaction can go, you must read Mr. Gladstone's report on the condition of things in Italy. I send it by the next messenger. It makes one's hair stand on end." This feeling was increased by the visit of the Duke of Genoa, the brother of Victor Emmanuel. The queen presented him with a beautiful riding-horse, with the words, "I hope that you will ride this horse when the battles are fought for the liberation of Italy." At the same time the prince took great pains to keep himself outside and above party. He rebuked his brother for visiting the Cosmopolitan Club, because he absurdly imagined that it might involve him in political complications. Indeed, the state of affairs was very serious, as is graphically described in Prince Albert's letters.

Everything depends on whether the Emperor Nicholas is anxious for war or not. There is no doubt that he is hankering after forbidden fruit; but whether he is ready to pay the price of a European war we do not yet know. . . . He wished to bring about an offensive and defensive alliance with Austria and Prussia against England and France; in other words, to make Germany again pay the reckoning for his Russian cupidity in the East. Austria agreed if Prussia would accede. The emperor succeeded in stirring up the king's wrath against France, but he could not drive Manteuffel from his position of neutrality. We have been obliged to form an *entente cordiale* with Louis Napoleon. The French are occupied with money-making, and the emperor is often out of health. . . . In England we are indignant against Russia, but determined to keep the peace as long as we can. . . . We might be forced into a war; we could not let Constantinople be taken by the Russians. . . . The best solution would be found in Austria taking up an honorable and manly attitude.

On November 1, 1853, Russia declared war against Turkey, and on November 16 Lord Palmerston left the Cabinet. Prince Albert writes on this subject:—

The day before yesterday an element of war disappeared from the cabinet in the shape of Lord Palmerston. He resigned purely on a question of internal policy. The great Liberal, Bramarbas, who wishes to force free institutions on all countries, finds a measure of reform which is approved of by Aberdeen too liberal. What a plague the man has been to us! His retirement naturally weakens the ministry, and gives the Protectionists and ultra-Tories a leader in the Lower House. It is probably his object to place himself at their head, and to force himself upon us one of these days as prime minister.

Shortly afterwards he was persuaded to return, which caused the erroneous impression that the Cabinet was beating up for war. Indeed, reluctant as the royal pair were to ally themselves with Napoleon III., the queen wrote to King Leopold that the war was "popular beyond belief."

The history of the Crimean war occupies a large share in the duke's book. Although he exercised little influence over events, he possessed admirable opportunities for knowing everything that went on. Sovereign of a small State belonging to a large confederation, he was obliged to be his own foreign minister and his own ambassador. His political sympathies were naturally on the side of England. He desired to destroy the influence which Russia exercised over all the German States. An ultimatum was addressed by England and came to Russia on February 27. A few days before this Prince Albert writes: "How Russia can enter upon a war under such circumstances, God only knows. The emperor must be mad to do it. But whether he does it or not, the magician's wand with which he commands Europe is broken." The ultimatum was supported by Austria at St. Petersburg, but Prussia declined even to take this step. Still less would she hear of doing anything which might draw her into a war with Russia. At this juncture Duke Ernest undertook, with the sanction of his uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, a journey to Paris, which was partly of a political nature, and of which he gives an interesting account. Prince Albert was at first very angry at the suggestion. He probably thought his brother would not be sufficiently discreet, and he only gave at last a hesitating approval. This was the first occasion on which a reigning prince had visited the new court of the Tuileries. He was received at the frontier with all honor, came to Paris by special train, and was lodged in the Pavillon Marsan. Everything reminded him of the mutability of fortune. He conversed with the king of Westphalia and with the son of Murat. The dinner napkins bore the cipher of Louis Philippe. The pictures, the furniture, even the servants gave suggestions of the Orleanist court. King Jerome told him that his chief object was to preserve his nephew from the dangerous paths of Napoleon I.; that the Napoleons were an unfortunate race, and that the emperor could only preserve himself by the greatest prudence and self-control. He believed that an

alliance with Germany would give greater security to the imperial throne than an alliance with England. The emperor spoke freely on political subjects. He said that it was fearful to think that they were standing on the eve of a terrible war, which no one desired, and which was of no use to any one. The next day he delivered to the duke a long statement of his policy. He said that the chief mistakes of his uncle lay in not recognizing the principle of nationalities, and that this proved his destruction. A speedy termination of the war could only be effected by an alliance with Prussia and Austria, which he particularly desired; their neutrality, on the other hand, could only prolong the war. Eventually he unfolded to the duke the deepest objects of his policy — the liberation of Italy from Austria, the restoration of Poland, and, above all, a general European congress for the revision of the treaties of Vienna and the securing of a lasting peace. To this might be added the creation of a united Scandinavia and the aggrandisement of Prussia. It was evident that he regarded the Crimea as only the first in a series of most important undertakings. France was to obtain compensation either on the Rhine or in Italy. Whilst the emperor did his best to engage the duke as a mediator for an alliance with Prussia, the empress regarded him mainly as the brother of Prince Albert and the brother-in-law of Queen Victoria. She asked innumerable questions about the queen and her family. "Ah!" she said, "if only all queens were as virtuous as the late queen of Portugal and Queen Victoria!" She added that the one hope of Spain was his cousin, King Ferdinand of Portugal. No flattery was omitted which could tend to soften the heart of the English court towards their former aversion. The emperor, as he sat in his armchair smoking cigarettes one after the other, conversing in a dreamy fashion, appeared to the duke more like a German scholar than the ruler of France. He sometimes recited whole poems of Schiller, and broke suddenly from French into German. Even his political views resembled those of a German *doctrinaire*. He remarked that the national feeling of Germany was stronger than any armies, although the unity of Germany would be a bad thing for France to put up with. When they parted, on March 10, the emperor said to him: "Remember me to your brother, whose great qualities I can appreciate, and who, I believe, is as kindly disposed to-

wards me as you are. I should be delighted to be able to speak with him, but the sea is between us."

Prince Albert in a letter expressed himself satisfied with the result of his brother's journey. After impressing upon him that Prussia was far more directly concerned than England in crushing the power of Russia, he continued:—

Our preparations for war proceed twice as quickly as those of the French. The fleet in the Baltic will be magnificent, although somewhat too heavy for that shallow sea. Twenty-five thousand men are organized for Constantinople, of whom ten thousand have already arrived in Malta; the artillery have started, and the cavalry will go through France, and, by the wish of the emperor, march through Paris. Who could have thought it a year ago!

It was vain to think any longer of peace, or to hope for the co-operation of the two German powers. They confined themselves to giving a mutual guarantee of each other's dominions. The treaty of alliance between England and France was signed on April 10. Prince Albert remarks upon it:—

The alliance with Napoleon is, I believe, sincere and solid. National jealousies have ceased—at least on our side. There is a Russian party in Paris, but not a trace of one here. Morny is said to be a Russian agent, and to have in view the breaking of Persigny's neck. It is in Brussels itself—in the house of Princess Lieven—that Brunnow, Kisseleff, and Creptovitch execute their unholy witches' dance round the boiling caldron.

After a short visit to Berlin, where the king congratulated him on having safely escaped from the lion's den, the duke proceeded to Vienna, where the emperor made even a more favorable impression upon him than he had done two years before. He seemed to possess an extraordinary talent for government, deciding all important questions himself, but leaving the details to be worked out by his ministers. Francis Joseph had a strong regard for the emperor Nicholas, but he felt that Austria might against her will be forced into a war with Russia. Signs of preparation were everywhere manifest, and the duke with characteristic self love began to imagine that he would be promoted to a high command. However, while still in Vienna he heard from his brother that the Russian faction in Berlin had gained a complete victory, and had driven every good German and Prussian out of office. Yet that was no reason why Austria should not go on. It would be quite erroneous to

suppose that the Western powers were not in earnest with the war.

The war is certainly not popular in France. Here it is just the opposite. Englishmen are desirous to an incredible degree of fighting against a nation whose form of government and foreign policy they detest. The Opposition, who wish to take the popular side, have no weapon against the ministry, except to decry them as being too lukewarm with regard to the war, and especially to throw suspicion on Lord Aberdeen, who alone keeps the whole coalition together. . . . The fact that ten millions of *new* taxes will be imposed is a proof that we are in earnest. . . . Our difficulty lies in our prosperity. We can get no soldiers, seamen, or ships, so enormous is our trade, our industry, and our emigration. We have 40,000 sailors in America, 10,000 in Australia, and so on.

On his return from Vienna the duke visited the king of Prussia at Potsdam. Every pains was taken to prevent a conversation which might have been irritating. The suite interrupted at inopportune moments, and at last the queen said outright, "Do not let us bother the poor duke with these wretched politics, for I dare say he is tired after his fatiguing journey, and will be glad to get back to Berlin." Prince Albert wrote, on receiving an account of these events:—

Your news from Berlin unfortunately agrees with ours, and shows a terrible state of things. The king has written an extraordinary letter of sixteen pages to Victoria, in which he accuses Bunsen and Bonin of all kinds of offences against their sovereign, even to the tricolored shirt-studs which Bunsen wore in 1848. . . . Victoria's answer tried to make it clear that the more consistently the king acted and carried out a policy which rested upon a contradiction, so much the more contradictory must his action be. No contradiction could be greater than to wish evil to France because Russia did what was wrong.

In the mean time the Crimean war pursued its course. The inherent difficulties of the problem were increased by the inconveniences of the alliance and by other circumstances. The Duke of Wellington has told us that one of the causes of his success in Spain was the certainty that the French marshals could not co-operate together. This state of things does not seem to have improved under the second empire. The duke when at Paris expressed his surprise to Marshal Magnan that St. Arnaud in his precarious state of health should have been chosen for so important a command, and received the extraordinary answer, "*La canaille crèvera en route.*" It was impossible for a

French fleet to support the English fleet in the Baltic, because no French sailor had any knowledge of that sea. Our expectations of victory seem to have been formed on inadequate grounds. Lord Cowley said one day to Prince Chimay, "When the Russian fleets have been burned in the Baltic and the Black Sea the war will have lost much of its interest." The English expected the co-operation of the Turks, but their delay made it likely that they would find nothing but turbans. The emperor himself was in a wretched state of health. The organic disease which never afterwards left him began at this time, and he aged visibly from day to day under severe neuralgic pains. The expenses of the war began to press seriously on the French finances. As Prince Albert remarked, the emperor was in the position of a theatrical manager whose clients were clamoring for a new piece every day. Prince Albert wrote further at the end of June, 1854:—

The ministers give us a great deal of trouble. Aberdeen is still in 1814, Palmerston in 1848, Lord John in 1830. The Parliament and the press have become each and all at a moment's notice born generals, and are only prevented from conquering Russia by the army, which, they say, is worth nothing; the ministry of war, which ought to be held by Palmerston; and the Court, which persists in holding Palmerston aloof.

At last the expedition to Sebastopol was undertaken. Prince Albert, although not the author of this scheme, gave it his full support. He wrote to his brother:—

The right thing for us to do is, without doubt, to attack the Crimea. Whatever the end of the war may be, the East has no chance of life so long as Sebastopol remains as it is. . . . I consider the diversion against Sebastopol as politically the proper course, and strategically the most effective. I should consider a landing in Odessa in the rear of the Russians as more powerful than an attack on their left wing. Public opinion should also consider the position of Napoleon III. We stand in need of a success which not even a victory in Moldavia could give us.

Duke Ernest believed, contrary to received opinion, that the real desire of the French emperor was to attack Russia in Poland. Before the expedition was carried out all the world knew of it. It was decided in council on June 28, and the allied troops did not disembark in the Crimea till September 14. In the mean time Prince Albert and the emperor Napoleon had met at Boulogne, and had established relations of a more friendly

character than any one could have expected. The victory of the Alma succeeded, and the false news of the taking of Sebastopol, which deceived even the emperor of Austria. Then followed the battles of Balaklava and Inkerman, the tedious siege and the dreary winter. Prince Albert writes at the end of November:—

I have only one thought, and that is with our heroes in the Crimea. The poor fellows are much exposed, and behave wonderfully well. At Inkerman 6,000 English held out for two hours, then 8,000 for four hours, until they were reinforced by 6,000 French. These 14,000 men supported an attack of 60,000 Russians for nine hours in all, and repulsed them. The Russian dead that we had to bury were 4,500! Multiply that by five to obtain the number of the wounded, and that gives the result that 14,000 men disabled 15-20,000 of the enemy—a fact without parallel in the history of war.

Again on December 26 he writes:—

From Sebastopol we have no news except the many sufferings of the troops. All communications are utterly impossible from the total disintegration of the soil. The enemy must, however, be in the same condition, and must be even more impeded by it.

The bad news caused even a more painful effect in Paris. The emperor began to wish for peace. The expenses of the army amounted to three million francs a day. Prince Albert would have been willing to consent to peace on the basis of the "four points" if he could have been certain that they would be honorably carried out by Russia. Sardinia joined the alliance of the western powers on January 25, 1855. But an entire change in the situation was wrought by the sudden death of the emperor Nicholas on March 2. He had ordered on February 10 a *levée en masse* of the whole population. Believing that the Russian troops could stand the winter better than the allies, he urged his generals in the Crimea to assume the offensive. He died from devotion to his duties. Already overstrained by the difficulties of the war, he insisted on attending a parade of troops on Monday, February 26. He drove back in an open sledge, and caught the inflammation which caused his death.

The immediate result was to stimulate the desire for peace. Conferences were opened at Vienna on May 15, but these were rendered useless by the reluctance of the young emperor to accept the third of the "four points"—the limitation of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea. This was considered indispensable for the security of Turkey. Prince Albert illus-

trates the rejection of it as follows: "A band of robbers threatens a house and attacks it; the inhabitants and neighbors come out to defend it. After hard fighting peace is made on these terms, that the robbers are to remain encamped before the house, but are to allow the inhabitants to spend the rest of their lives in standing sentry in front of it." There was nothing left but to continue the war. It was determined at a conference held at Windsor Castle on April 18, at which the emperor was present, that the war should be energetically pursued, and Sebastopol taken at any price. The national enthusiasm was considerable, but it did not still the voice of party conflict. Prince Albert writes on May 1:—

Lord Derby and the Protectionists wished to make common cause with Layard and his followers in order to overthrow the Palmerstonian government. They were beaten in the Upper House by the awkwardness of Lord Ellenborough, who was to have conducted the attack, but the attack was renewed by Disraeli in the Lower House. Then Gladstone and the Peelites took up the cry of peace, declared themselves against all prosecution of the war, and threw all the blame on Aberdeen and his colleagues, who had resigned, for their former weak and faulty conduct of the war, the public opinion having long desired to find a scapegoat. Disraeli—whose principal desire was to injure Lord John and his peace policy in Vienna, and who had attacked the uncertainty of the Palmerston Cabinet—was now in the position, with the support of the whole Liberal and patriotic party, to direct his whole strength against the Peelites. Palmerston obtains a large majority, but is obliged to proceed to the most violent warlike measures, and is freed from all control which might compel him to moderation in his foreign policy. At the same time the Russian party in Europe is able to use the expressions of the most distinguished of English statesmen to their advantage, and to represent the war as nothing but an outburst of savage passion against Russia. All this, however, has been surpassed by Lord Grey, who, inflamed by the passionate desire to contradict the whole House of Lords, and perhaps the whole world, has gone so far in a motion as to defend the mission of Menshikov and the invasion of the Principalities. The conferences at Vienna, which it would have been better to leave open, must now be closed, if only to give the ministry some rest in Parliament. Oh! Oxenstiern! Oxenstiern!

At the beginning of May, 1855, the duke paid a visit to Paris and London. He found the emperor and empress full of their recent visit to England. The alliance appeared to be not only restored, but to be stronger than ever. He arrived in London just as the queen was distributing



the Crimean medals for the first time with her own hand. The conflict of parties in Parliament found its full echo in the conversations of the palace. Every one wished for peace, but did not know how to obtain it. The blame was laid principally upon the king of Prussia; Austria was treated with more consideration. There was nothing left but for the war to pursue its course, although the losses had been terrible. Out of two hundred thousand French soldiers sent to the Crimea more than seventy thousand had died.\*

In Russia public feeling was very bitter against England, but more moderate towards the French and their emperor. On June 7 the French attacked and carried the Mamelon, but the great assault on the Malakhoff and the Redan on the anniversary of Waterloo failed with the loss of 7,551 French and 2,447 English killed and wounded. The battle of the Tchernaiia first raised the hopes of the allies. On September 5 a furious bombardment was opened, in which five thousand Russians lost their lives. On September 8 Sebastopol surrendered.

The conclusion of the war did not cause any great satisfaction to the emperor of the French. He regarded it as the point of departure for new designs. He desired above everything the abolition of the treaties of 1815, and saw in Austria the principal hindrance to his plans. He considered that there were certain open questions, such as Poland and Italy, which could only be determined by a European congress. His ill-feeling against Austria showed itself in various ways. Austria had not congratulated him on the capture of Sebastopol. It was a little too much, he said, to receive congratulations when Sebastopol had not been taken, and not to receive them when it had been. In England there was a great reluctance to conclude a definite peace. This was felt to be an unrivalled opportunity for humiliating Russia, and for expelling her from Bessarabia, the Crimea, and the Caucasus, with the help of Austria. The king of the Belgians appears even at this time to have foreseen that the course of European politics could only terminate in a Franco-Prussian war. However, in March, 1856, Louis Napoleon stood on the summit of his power. The conclusion of the peace of Paris exhibited him as the mediator of Europe. On March 16 the cannon of the Tuileries announced the birth of an heir

to the imperial crown. Peace was signed at one o'clock on the afternoon of March 30.

The piping time of peace which intervened between the Crimean and the Italian wars witnessed a large extension of the marriage connections of the Coburgs, to which they already owed so much of their aggrandisement. It had been said at an earlier epoch: "Let others fight; thou, lucky Austria, wed." But, from being Catholic, Austria was confined to alliances with members of its own religion. Prussia, on the other hand, could intermarry with Protestants on the one hand, and members of the Greek Church on the other. The close private relations between Berlin and St. Petersburg had materially affected the fortunes of the Crimean war. Those who wished to see Germany united under the hegemony of Prussia were anxious to break the yoke of Russian preponderance. For these reasons the betrothal of the princess royal of England to the crown-prince of Prussia was a political event of some importance. At the same time the prince consort loved his eldest daughter far too well to sacrifice her happiness to political considerations. He had taken a large share in her education, and the dearest wish of his heart had been for a long time to see her in a commanding position, in which she might be able to exercise a wide influence. The idea of the union, which was finally carried out, may have occurred to the parents some years before. The prince and princess of Prussia, who stayed in England in 1853, had full opportunity of seeing their future daughter-in-law, who was then thirteen years old. When Duke Ernest visited them at Coblenz in the autumn of 1855, he was informed of the betrothal as a strict secret. The prince consort writes to his brother on September 24:—

Yesterday I received your letter of the 20th, according to which you will arrive at Coblenz to-day on your return from Paris. You will, perhaps, learn there what I now write to you, that our guest has announced to us his wish to be united with Vicky *with the king's consent*. We have readily agreed, but have asked that the offer to V. herself might be deferred till after her confirmation next spring. Marriage cannot be thought of before her seventeenth birthday in November, 1857. You will recognize, as we do, the importance of this event, and will participate in our pleasure at it. The parents in Coblenz are extremely happy, and the betrothal of the sister with your brother-in-law binds yourself and Alexandrina in an additional tie. My lame hand and painful

\* These numbers are the duke's. He declares them to be more trustworthy than the official accounts, which were disgracefully garbled.



shoulder compel me to conclude. I have only been able to hold my pen since yesterday, and that badly. Fritz Wilhelm leaves us tomorrow. I must make a general request that under the present circumstances you will keep the secret. Every one will speak of the event, but as long as none of us does so it does not matter.

The seal of secrecy was not removed till April 4, 1856, when the princess had been confirmed, and the peace of Paris concluded. It is strange, in the light of recent events, to see with what enthusiasm and with what brilliant hopes this union was regarded by the Prussian court. The German courts are not the first who, when they have attained their object, try to kick down the ladder by which they have risen. The princess of Prussia wrote to the duke: "May God bless this union for the beloved children, for our families, and for the poor German Fatherland, which can only raise itself from its present position in a natural manner by an alliance with England."

The duke gives an interesting picture of the betrothed pair, who have since become so illustrious, and whom he knew so well:—

They possessed in their youthful years all those qualities which inspire love and enthusiasm at once and forever. The manly, vigorous appearance of the prince, his open nature, his unprejudiced judgment of affairs, soon conciliated the friendship even of men older than himself. His great gifts and his unusual knowledge and powers almost made one fear that a narrow circle of activity might not be sufficient to develop his rich intellect to its full beauty and to raise it higher. It seemed that the powerful nature of the young man, so great physically and mentally, would, in the position he then occupied, find no worthy occupation which might bring it to perfection. The princess, who was much younger, possessed as rich an understanding as her future husband for intellectual and political interests. While her emotions were fully developed, she had made almost too much progress in knowledge and accomplishments, and had ripened in a truly manly school. She completely realized in herself the pedagogic and ethical ideal which my brother had set himself to construct from a very early period. In this respect the princess was entirely the pupil of Prince Albert, and as she was his favorite child she remained in many respects the most like him. My brother had educated her himself in the positive sciences, and in some subjects had been actually her tutor. She thus early acquired a habit of acting on principles which my brother himself possessed, and which he knew how to impart to his favorite daughter. By her marriage my brother lost an occupation which had be-

come dear to him and which had been very stimulating. The boys of the house had too little pliancy to make such a close relation possible between them and their father. The other daughters were too young, and thus the prospect of a separation filled my brother's letters with sadness and bad spirits long before it actually occurred.

The wedding took place in London on January 25, 1858. The young pair were received with the greatest enthusiasm in their own country, and no one in Germany doubted that the future of the German nation depended on the results of this auspicious union.

Before this took place the king of Prussia's health had entirely broken down, and the monarchy of Frederick the Great, which had long needed a strong hand to control it, was about to pass under a new master. In September, 1857, at the end of the autumn manoeuvres the king rode suddenly up to the duke, tears burst from his eyes, he gasped for breath, and grasping the duke by the arm said with difficulty: "I am very ill, dear duke, much worse than any one believes. You will never see me again. Do not forget me." At the dinner which followed, the king's conduct became so eccentric that a regency seemed to be imminent. This was for the time averted, and a painful period of weakness and indecision ensued. Prince Albert, who visited his daughter at Babelsberg in June, 1858, writes to the duke:—

Here I find the young pair united in the tenderest love, the father cheerful, but somewhat too confident in the satisfactory nature of his isolated position and his power. The king came with the queen and spent half an hour, in which he did not once speak irrationally, but his appearance is terribly depressed, the ruins of his former personality. Yet he goes about as king, feels himself such, and hopes for improvement.

Two months later the duke joined the family circle in Berlin, and found the prince of Prussia determined to do nothing which could in the slightest degree injure the feelings or weaken the position of his brother, although Prince Albert seemed to be in favor of more energetic action. In October the king was ordered to spend the winter in Italy, and the prince of Prussia became regent. The momentous character of this great change, the inauguration of a new era which led eventually to Sadowa and Sedan, did not escape the penetration of Prince Albert. He writes:—

The importance of this great alteration in Berlin must exercise a sensible influence on

the whole of Germany, although it will, perhaps, express itself in a practical manner at first by degrees. The great net of reaction is torn asunder by a movement proceeding from the throne without a revolution, without bombast, without promises, without ulterior designs. This means a great deal. It is not, however, less unacceptable to France, where latterly one mistake has succeeded another. In Austria they appear to be less shocked about Berlin, partly because one has to do there with honorable people, and partly because the influence of Russia is as much dreaded as the democracy.

After the conclusion of the peace of Paris the tranquillity of Europe was by no means assured. Russia began immediately to pay court to France, and although her overtures were not accepted, they produced some effect. Napoleon III. felt that England would not assist his plans with regard to Poland and Italy. We were occupied with the Indian mutiny and with the supposed designs of Russia upon India. For this reason we insisted on the conditions of the peace being strictly enforced, whereas France seemed inclined to adopt the interpretation most favorable to her recent foe. The discrimination between the true and the false Bolgrad, the importance of the Isle of Serpents for the navigation of the Danube, the destruction of the fortifications of Kars, were all occasions of serious argument. The life of the emperor was attacked, especially by Italians, who congregated in London and in Switzerland. Cavour had laid the cause of Italy before the congress, and his views were warmly supported by Prince Jerome and the Duc de Morny. The emperor's difficulties were increased by a quarrel with his cousin Prince Napoleon about the regency. Another difficult question was that of the Danubian principalities, of which Prince Albert gives a graphic account in July, 1857:—

The question of the principalities is still very much in embryo. They must be organized by a commission of the powers. France wishes them to be united, and that the powers shall declare this. Russia is ready to do so. Austria and the Porte are against the union, and the first insists that it shall be finally excluded from the questions to be decided by the voice of the principalities. We oppose both views and hold by the protocol, which says that the wishes of the principalities are to be consulted, as no settlement can be lasting which does not rest upon the wishes of the people. Whether this is done or not, the Porte wishes for a hospodar for life, three names being proposed by the Porte and one chosen; and to this our ministry is inclined to agree. I am opposed to it as a repetition of

the history of Poland, the origin of endless intrigues and endless rivalry between Austria and Russia. I think that the hereditary principle will triumph, but that the viceroy will be so placed that he cannot make himself independent of Turkey, since the whole object of the war and the peace was to secure the integrity of the Porte. Russia insists that the regent (be there one or two) should be of the Greek religion. It is uncertain whether he should be chosen from the country itself, or whether he should be a foreign prince. In the first case we should get an uncivilized, intriguing man; in the second case we must go to the smaller German courts, and then they cry out, "What! Another King Otho? We have enough with one." What they think about all this in Paris I do not know. Now you have the whole matter before you, and you will infer that it will be a long time before we come to talk of candidates.

Indeed, the proclamation of the first prince of Roumania, Prince Alexander John Couza, was made on December 23, 1861, the very day that the prince consort was buried in St. George's Chapel.

In order to carry out his Italian policy, Napoleon had to reckon with Austria, which held a large portion of that peninsula in subjection. This made him more inclined to friendship with Russia, the hereditary foe of the Austrian Empire, and this again brought him into collision with England, where the ground-swell of recent hostilities had not yet subsided. Prince Albert writes on October 5, 1857:—

Russia has obviously suffered more than she will allow, and requires a few years' rest to resume her little game. In the mean time she wishes to break up the western alliances, and finds good material for doing so in the rascality of French public servants, and the good-humored indifference of their sovereigns in matters which have not yet come to a head. It is easy for us to stand with our backs against the wall because we are governed by fixed principles.

Prince Chimay informed the duke a little later that French national feeling was cooling down as to the English alliance, and that it would be imperilled if Lord Palmerston remained in power and continued to stir up democratic feeling. At the same time, Louis Napoleon now stood at the height of his power. The year 1857 witnessed a pilgrimage of kings and princes to the Tuileries. Even the Russian grand duke Constantine was among the number, which caused a painful feeling in England. In August the emperor and empress paid a visit to Osborne. Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston were also invited. But the most important utter-

ances of the emperor on political subjects were reserved for the ear of Prince Albert in a private walk. A full account of this conversation is given in the "Life of the Prince Consort." The result was not favorable to mutual good understanding. The emperor announced his approaching interview with the emperor of Russia at Stuttgart, which was the point of a new departure. Prince Albert neither approved of friendship to the enemy of England, nor of perilous adventures in new enterprises. He warned the emperor that his strength lay in breaking up the old northern alliance against France, that he had nothing to offer in return for a Russian alliance, and that to place Austria in the power of Russia would endanger the peace of Europe. In the mean time Cavour, supported by his chivalrous sovereign, was pleading the cause of Italy in every European court. The revolutionary left of the Italian patriots were in close alliance with French anarchists. The duke assures us that the conspiracy which culminated in the *attentat* of January 14, 1858, was not so much an act of Italian vengeance as a French movement to overthrow the existing government in France, and that the prominence of Orsini in the plot has given it a false complexion in history. The duke happened to be an eyewitness of this remarkable event, and his account of it is extremely interesting.

He arrived in Paris on January 12, and heard that a general rising in the capital and the provinces had been fixed for that very day. In Paris there was nothing but quiet and contentment. The emperor was in the best of spirits. The French police seemed to have their eyes directed more to Orleanist and Legitimist conspiracies than to the coercion of anarchists and reds. The duke on visiting the emperor found him well in health and cheerful in mind. Not a shadow of care or misgiving was to be discerned either in the political situation or in the domestic life of the palace. On Monday, January 14, the duke accompanied the emperor to the forest of Fontainebleau. The journey was occupied by a conversation between the emperor and a railway deputation specially summoned, in which he complained of the insufficiency and the costliness of existing railway accommodation both for goods and passengers. He wished to establish a uniform tariff for long and short distances, and international postage stamps. The proposal met with little favor, but the emperor did not consider himself beaten. It was dark when they returned

to Paris. The emperor accompanied the duke to his lodgings, and as they drove over the Pont Neuf and by the statue of Henry IV. he said: "The only assassination I care about is that with the knife, when the murderer sacrifices his own life in the attempt. In all other attacks on the life of sovereigns the traitors hope to be able to escape by flight." At parting the emperor invited him to come that evening to the opera, and offered to call for him on the way. The emperor was to visit the opera for the first time after a long interval. The duke preferred to await his host at the opera, and an imperial carriage was sent to fetch him.

The emperor's private entrance to the opera was from a *cul-de-sac* opening out of the Rue Lepelletier, the entrance to which was on this evening barred by a company of infantry. In the little street itself every window was illuminated and occupied by a policeman, while about twenty of the same force stood before the houses opposite the theatre. The duke's carriage was obliged from the crush to go at a foot's pace through the Rue Lepelletier. As the soldiers who barred the entrance to the *cul-de-sac* made room for it to pass, some one stopped the horses for a moment. The duke heard his name called out. He then mounted the theatre staircase, and at the invitation of General Fleury remained in the open air smoking a cigar. The evening was mild and genial, and as the conversation turned on the measures of police security which were before their eyes, General Fleury remarked that the present arrangements were so perfect as to render an attack like that at the Opéra Comique impossible. Just at this moment cries of "Vive l'empereur!" were heard in the Rue Lepelletier. The officers gave the word of command and the drums began to beat. The duke and his companions threw away their cigars and retired into the vestibule, when an explosion was heard which sounded like the firing of a company of soldiers. They went to the door to see what had happened. At this instant a second bomb exploded under the carriage of the emperor, and threw to the ground the coachman, the horses, the servants, and the Uhlans of the escort. The groans of the wounded and cries for help were heard in the street. The emperor and empress rushed in. The empress, who was quite overcome, seized the duke's arm and cried, "Save me!" The emperor was speechless, and made strange gestures, so that he appeared to be

wounded. His hat had been driven in on one side by a ball. Almost immediately a third explosion followed. The bomb must have been thrown directly at the door of the vestibule. Balls and splinters shattered the windows and ricocheted on to the roof. A number of people had crowded into the vestibule, several of whom were wounded. The duke dragged the empress up the stairs to the box, throwing down some one who stood in the way. The emperor seemed undetermined what to do, but presently followed them up the steps. The opera was already proceeding with the first act of "William Tell." At the first pause the emperor and empress advanced to the front of the box. Not a hand was raised or a sound heard, although the attempt must by this time have been well known. The emperor remarked to the duke in German: "There you see the Parisians. One can never be too severe with them." The empress had regained her composure when she found that the emperor and herself were entirely uninjured. On the other hand the emperor was terribly excited, was very pale, and quivered nervously. No one could tell what was going on in the streets of Paris. Orders were given to Marshal Vaillant to put the garrison under arms.

When Pietri, the minister of police, appeared, the emperor rushed at him. The little man was pale as death. "Well?" said the emperor. "We know nothing whatever," replied Pietri. "There," said the emperor to the duke in German, "you see the famous Napoleonic police." An hour afterwards Pietri appeared again, and reported that they had made some arrests, but were no further advanced than before, and that they had no names. The scene in the emperor's box was painful. Marshal Canrobert wept like a child. Princess Mathilde was nearly beside herself. When Prince Napoleon appeared at the close of the evening the empress turned her back upon him, and the emperor did not offer him his hand. The prince had just arrived from a banquet of the opposition. It was not till long after the close of the opera that the news was brought that the streets from the Rue Lepelletier to the Tuileries were occupied by troops. Everything was quiet in the streets; the only traces of the event were the stains of blood on the pavement. General Roquet, who was slightly wounded in the neck, assured the duke that if he had accepted the emperor's invitation to accompany him he would have infallibly

been killed, as the balls had flown over the heads of the others, and the duke was taller. The duke believed that the official accounts were entirely false, and that the attack was the work of French conspirators. Certainly there was a desire to draw a veil over the whole affair, and on no single occasion was the slightest allusion made to the catastrophe between the French sovereigns and their guest who had so narrowly escaped.

The immediate effect of this outrage was to strain the relations still more between France and the country which had sheltered the conspirators. There was even a talk of war. Baraguay d'Hilliers, who had lost one arm, said that he would willingly lose the other in fighting a country which could protect such monsters with its flag. The duke believes that, whereas the crime had really a French origin, an attempt was made to represent it as purely Italian, and to cast the blame on England and Belgium. Orsini was put forward by Jules Favre as a martyr to Italian liberty. His letters to the emperor were published in the *Moniteur*. The duke thinks it is probable that the first letter was inspired by Pietri, and that the second was not genuine. It was certainly used with great effect by Cavour to turn public opinion in favor of the war with Austria. The *attentat* produced a serious effect upon the emperor. He never left the Tuileries after dark. He instituted a Draconian *régime* in Paris, to which, the duke says, two thousand persons fell victims. He sought to divert attention from internal troubles by a foreign war. For this purpose he drew still more closely to Russia. Prince Albert writes to his brother on April 22, 1858:—

From Paris we hear nothing good. The whole machine has become uncertain and unsteady. The chief sees himself drawn to Italy, where he intends to produce a conflagration, which we must try to hinder, unless all Europe is to be set ablaze. They are playing with the holiest and most dangerous things, and lamenting Orsini. The feeling against England is rising in Paris, and the acquittal of Bernard, with the violent speech of Mr. James, the advocate for the defence, and the indecent joy of the public at the declaration of the verdict, must have offended them exceedingly. The government does not dare to go on with the trial, because a repetition of the result is certain, and can only bring greater damage. The public here is determined not to make itself the policeman, the beadle, or the executioner of a foreign tyrant, and has an idea that there is an intention to give us this part, and to compel us to play it by threats.

In this lies the cause of Palmerston's fall, in the failure of the Refugee Bill and of the trial, and there is something noble at the bottom of it. Yet a people cannot reason—it only feels.

The policy of the emperor was to annul as far as possible the growing ill-feeling between the two countries. He therefore laid great stress on the desirability of the queen and prince attending the opening of the new docks at Cherbourg, which had been built as a menace to England. Prince Albert was not at all disposed to accept the invitation. He wrote from Osborne on July 10, 1858:—

We have been here for only three days, but are followed by business of the most difficult and most unpleasant description, just as if we were in London. A Tory ministry with Radical programmes, republican measures carried through by a Conservative majority against a regulated Liberal opposition, is an endless difficulty for a constitutional monarch. We are pressed by the emperor and by our ministers to go to Cherbourg. As the festivities there contain in their inmost essence a celebration of triumph at the land and sea armaments against England, and as we have no desire either to be harnessed to the triumphal car of the French or to kiss the rod, we shall content ourselves with a private visit, and depart before the festivities begin.

The all-important interview between the emperor Napoleon and Count Cavour took place just at this time. Nothing was said about it to Prince Albert at Cherbourg, although he was quite aware that momentous conclusions had been arrived at. Indeed, the duke assures us that the principal points which were settled at Plombières had really been determined in the previous April between the emperor and Bixio, and that the arrangements then made included a possible war with Austria, to set Italy free as far as the Adriatic, the cession of Nice and Savoy to France, and the marriage of Prince Napoleon with Princess Clotilde. The power most concerned seems to have remained in complete ignorance. Austria could not understand why Piedmont should be arming.

For the world at large the bolt fell on January 1, 1859, like a thunderbolt out of a blue sky, when the emperor expressed to Baron Hübnér at the diplomatic reception of that day his regret that the relations between the French and Austrian governments were not so good as they had formerly been. Mérimée remarked to Panizzi that the state of things must be serious if the emperor went out of his way

to speak when it would have been so easy to be silent. The general feeling of Europe was strongly against the war, a sentiment which was deeply rooted in France itself. It is said that Delangle, the minister of the interior, being anxious to prove to the emperor how unpopular the war was, issued no orders for cheering Prince Napoleon when he entered Paris with his new bride, and that in consequence the young pair were received in chilling silence. Both France and Austria tried to secure the alliance of Prussia, a power which if thrown into the scale would easily have turned the balance. There was considerable fear lest even England might eventually be drawn into the contest. Prince Albert writes on February 10:—

The times are heavy and dark, and therefore friends will do well to maintain peaceful relations with each other before the storm breaks. The Emperor Napoleon seems desirous to evoke it, and much blood will flow, a great deal of noble German blood amongst it. May God pardon the man who brings so much unhappiness upon the world between sleep and waking with so light a heart! If you wish to have the text of the emperor's speech, read pages 244-270 in the first volume of the "Memoirs of Prince Eugene." Napoleon I. gives his son information in the year 1805 about his armaments for the Austerlitz campaign, and orders for the peaceful language which he is to hold. Later, also, he continually reiterates, "Parlez paix, agissez guerre."

Ten days later he communicates with his brother in still greater fulness:—

We are here very well satisfied with the demeanor of Prussia in the affairs of Italy. It is firm and moderate, and keeps the interests of Germany well in sight. I am glad to find that the national feeling in Germany has gone beyond the line which Prussia has adopted, because it shows that if a further advance should become necessary, it will take a German, and not a Prussian, character; and it is that very German feeling which makes an impression on Europe, because it is patriotic and unselfish. Prussia, on the other hand, is credited with ambitious, interested, and dishonorable motives. In spite of the moderation shown in Berlin, they are furious in Paris with Germany, Prussia, and, above all, with the prince regent, and they threaten the most sanguinary vengeance. The emperor expresses himself violently in this sense, and desires to see conditions in which the popular instinct has existence and speaks. You are supposed to be a worker in this cabal, uncle Leopold in the first rank, I in the second. How we have both conspired together is shown by our active (!!) correspondence. If



peace is preserved, it is owing entirely to Germany and to the attitude of England. It is true that the emperor says that the position which Germany takes up makes him anxious for the future, lest it should be no longer possible to maintain peace in Europe, but it ought to be just the other way. Now we must try in England to bring the Italian struggle back into the field of diplomatic understanding, as war would be a terrible misfortune for the world, and Austria is not so clean-handed and innocent that one would wish to shed one's blood for her. In Lombardy and Venetia she is at least only using her rights if she governs with severity; but the occupation of central Italy by Austria and France now for more than ten years, with the terrible oppression and demoralization which comes from it, is an abnormal state of things, contrary to the principles of international law, and a crass immorality.

At the end of February, 1859, the English government determined to send Lord Cowley to Vienna as a mediator. The Cabinet believed that they had only to build bridges for the emperor Napoleon to bring him back from his determination to go to war. Lord Cowley was ordered not to stop at Berlin, which caused great disappointment in that capital. The Prussians imagined that they had been deceived by England. Prince Albert did his best to remove misconceptions by writing to the princess of Prussia. He advised a perfectly plain and outspoken course, defining clearly the position of Prussia towards Austria and Germany, and showing that Prussia could only be expected to defend the Milanese, as Austria might be called upon to defend the Rhine.

At the beginning of March the report began to gain ground in Paris that Louis Napoleon had come to a complete understanding with Russia. By this time the feeling for war was stimulated, and the tone of the *Moniteur* towards Germany became more threatening. At the same time the process of military preparation continued in Sardinia and in the south of France, and thousands of workmen were laboring to clear the passage of the Mont Cenis. The only overt step taken by Russia was a proposal for a congress of the five powers, held on neutral territory. It soon became apparent that these were only devices to gain time. The duke believes that the emperor Napoleon had never seriously thought of giving up the war, and that Cavour and Victor Emmanuel were never in serious doubt as to his intentions, but that the emperor was resolved on war, and determined to localize it in Italy. According to this view, all decla-

rations of the French Cabinet after the middle of March, notes, articles, explanations, and newspaper paragraphs, had no other purpose than to conceal the immovable resolution of the head of the State. If this be true, it is painful to reflect on the amount of time and energy which were expended in attempting to prevent a war which was inevitable. The anxieties of this year went far to cost England the life of the prince consort, one of the first statesmen of his time, whose knowledge and insight will not be fully realized till documents can be published which from their nature must be revealed to posterity alone. Archduke Albert was sent to Berlin to prepare the placing of an Austrian army of two hundred and fifty thousand men on the Rhine, and to suggest that the emperor and the prince regent should conduct the operations together in person. It was also hoped that England would protect the coasts of Germany from an attack by the French fleet. These anxieties were suddenly put an end to by the demand made by Austria to Sardinia, that she should disarm within three days. This placed Austria entirely in the wrong, and the Cabinet declared that by this precipitate step she had forfeited "all claim upon the support or sympathy of England, whatever consequences might ensue from it." The duke on reaching England just at this crisis found three streams of public opinion in London society — a general wish for peace, or at least for neutrality; an outspoken sympathy for Piedmont and Italian freedom; and a repulsion towards France coupled with a distrust of Louis Napoleon. The queen and prince did not share the expectation that England could remain neutral. At any rate both Prussia and England began to arm. Even Belgium saw the need of strengthening herself to maintain her neutrality, so deep-seated was the want of confidence which the emperor of the French excited.

It is even now a matter of dispute as to what influences forced Austria into a course so disastrous for herself when she might have secured the sympathy of so many friends. Duke Ernest believes that the final impulse came from Russia. At the very moment when Austria took this step her army in Italy did not exceed one hundred and fifty-four thousand men, of whom thirty-three thousand were required for the garrisons in Lombardy and Venetia, and eleven thousand for the occupation of the Romagna. The invasion of Sardinia was begun with an army only one hundred and twelve thousand strong.



Even then ensued mischievous delay. A rapid march on Turin, the defeat of the Sardinian army, might have produced some advantage; but the Austrians believed that the French would appear in Italy much sooner than proved to be the case, and so little was gained.

The emperor Napoleon left Paris on May 10, and four days later established his headquarters at Alessandria, with an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men and one hundred and sixty-two cannon. However, there was much to impede his action. He desired to descend on Milan like a thunderbolt, but he soon found himself fully occupied in arranging the details of the commissariat. In 1859 as in 1870 France was not ready for war. By the end of May the prospect of freeing Venice seemed doubtful to acute observers in Paris. Negotiations were then proceeding between Austria and Prussia, when the battle of Magenta was fought on June 4, which caused the retreat of the Austrians to the Mincio.

The entry of the emperor Napoleon into Milan did much to change public opinion both in Germany and in England. The change thus produced is shown by two letters from Prince Albert to his brother, the one dated June 3 and the other June 18. The first runs as follows:

Yesterday evening I received your telegram in cipher. I knew that matters were very much as you describe them to me. With all their arrogance and all their overbearing pride, the Austrians have allowed themselves to be beaten on every occasion, great and small. They have already lost ten guns, four thousand dead and wounded, much ground, and their communications between their centre and Milan. The lakes and the Alps they have lost to Garibaldi. Here the prevailing desire is now for neutrality. Palmerston hopes soon to see the Austrians driven out of Italy, and for himself to upset the ministry on the address. Since the elections the ministers have 300 votes, against 350. If the Opposition would really keep together they are in a decisive minority. Up to yesterday they were divided, but yesterday terms were made between Lord John and Mr. Bright, while Lord John and Palmerston had previously come to an understanding. The *Allgemeine Zeitung* has produced a bad impression here by a stupid article, in which it insinuates that the Germans could march on Paris, because the French are unprepared. It has even drawn upon itself a very anti-German article in the *Times*. The great conspiracy for localizing the war begins to gain ground every day in the present position of things.

The second letter, written from Windsor on the anniversary of Waterloo, contains the following weighty considerations:—

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Your long letter to Victoria—the reasoning of which is completely right, and the logic irrefragable—yet seems to me not to embrace the whole position, and leads me to make the following observations. The government of England is popular in its character, and the constitution is one which becomes more democratic every day. Nations do not calculate; as masses they cannot calculate—they only feel. They are led, therefore, not by their interests, and still less by principles or deductions of politics or of international law—but only by feelings and instincts. To these belong the feeling for justice, the feeling for liberty, and especially a tendency towards self-preservation. Since 1817 the English nation has been striving towards a wider development of freedom and self-government both at home and in Europe. For just the same period Austria has been standing at the head of attacks upon peoples, their freedom, and their independence. Since 1830 the democracy has conquered in England, and the French democracy now joins it. From that time up to the epoch of the Spanish marriages, the cruelty of Austria in Italy and Hungary, and her severity in Germany, have been constantly held up before the English people by Palmerstonian diplomacy, the press, and the refugees. The concordat, the influence of the Jesuits, and the persecution of Protestants have filled up the measure. That Sardinia possesses the fullest sympathies of England as the one constitutional and tolerant state in Italy, notwithstanding its difficult position between Austria, France, and the Pope, does not require to be mentioned. Nothing short of the immorality of the conspiracy between Napoleon and Sardinia could have overcome all those feelings, and allowed the feeling for justice to come into activity, and even gain the upper hand. This was the case when you were here. Now Austria, by invading Sardinia, has at the same time destroyed the feeling for justice, and given it to the enemy. There remains then the tendency towards self-preservation. This is still strong, and impels towards hatred against France. But the Austrians have evacuated Lombardy, the States of the Church, Parma, Modena, etc. The feeling of the Italians for freedom and nationality begins to spread, and its song of triumph fills the ears of the English people. What statesman could take a step to drive the jubilant liberated Italians again under the Austrian yoke, and to sacrifice for that purpose the security and peace of his own country? All that we can do under the circumstances is to maintain the strictest neutrality.

It requires new events to awaken new feelings. Just at this moment the Derby Cabinet was overthrown, and was succeeded by Lord Palmerston with Lord

Russell as foreign secretary. At the same time Russia used her influence to prevent any combination between Austria and Prussia, and to localize the war as far as possible. Prussia was indeed at this juncture badly served. She had no foreign minister of the first rank in authority or in force of character. This defect formed the subject of a conversation with the duke, Prince Hohenzollern, and the prince regent of Prussia. The first two suggested the name of Bismarck, who was just giving up his post as ambassador at Frankfort, but the prince regent remarked that Bismarck must alter very much before he could undertake the guidance of foreign affairs. "All we want to complete our misfortunes," he remarked, "is a minister who would turn everything upside down."

On June 24 was fought the decisive battle of Solferino. Count Mensdorff, the duke's cousin, was engaged on the Austrian side. He was of opinion that the emperor of Austria need not have retreated, as his right wing had the decided superiority, on the left wing the battle was drawn, and only the centre was entirely beaten. At a later period Mensdorff sent the duke an interesting account of the engagement:—

With three weak cavalry regiments I held the whole of the enemy's cavalry and their numerous artillery placed in the centre in check from eight in the morning till five in the afternoon, so that they did not dare to advance. If I had possessed twice the strength, and only a few batteries of heavy calibre, I could have broken through this part of the line. Only an hour and a half's distance from the battlefield the whole army crossed the Mincio on a few narrow bridges without a single Frenchman daring to follow us. The guns they have taken are mostly only shattered fragments which we were obliged to leave, with the exception of a few pieces which stood in Solferino. All the men and horses belonging to them lay dead close by them. On our side 17,000 to 18,000 dead and wounded, amongst whom were 800 officers, covered the field of battle; the French and Sardinians confess to having lost 18,000 men. During the battle there was a burning sun, such as one only feels on the plains of Italy, so that soldiers lost their reason through sunstroke. I myself saw a man who had thrown away his coat dance about in the cannon fire and pelt the cavalry with clods of earth. Much may be explained by the consideration that many of the newly arrived corps had only just stepped out of the railway trains, that the soldiers had only been just summoned for service, and had been instructed only in the trains themselves how to load the new firearms, and that neither officers nor men knew

the very difficult ground of Northern Italy, which is like an orchard of mulberry-trees. Many regiments gave way because all their officers were dead or wounded, they themselves scarcely knew their companies, and could not find out their proper position on a plain where any distant view was impossible.

After the hard-fought battle the emperor Napoleon was extremely desirous for peace. He told the duke a year later in Baden-Baden that he regarded his Italian victories as the purest accident. He also said that all the stories related about his personal danger were entire inventions, and that he never even heard the whistle of a ball. War, he said, was a hateful thing; it was far too much a matter of chance. His army was in a very bad condition, and his generals had shown no capacity to command a large force. The Austrians had fought much better than the French, and there was no doubt that they would have taken Solferino if the emperor had advanced the reserves. The emperor of Austria, he said, was a considerable man, but unfortunately he lacked energy of will. The truth was that during the day of the battle Louis Napoleon was suffering from a disagreeable illness caused by the hot weather, and remained during the whole time in a distant villa.

Russia and England had offered their services as mediators, but the whole world was taken by surprise at the news of the peace of Villafranca. Prince Albert's remarks on the subject are as usual worth hearing.

"C'est une perfidie de l'Autriche!" cried the French when the Austrians evacuated the States of the Church, and Perugia revolted. England and Prussia are now led to say exactly the same thing since Austria has neither conquered nor been conquered. Now she has come to terms with the enemy, and has saved her Venetian territory. Germany ought to be delighted at this, and would be if she had in any way contributed to it. The position of Prussia is unpleasant and dishonorable to the last degree. Palmerston is furious that his victim has escaped, and that his bosom friend has played him such a trick. *Johnny was just going to settle everything*, and now stands like a young fool with his mouth open. They are still hoping for a congress, where Italian liberty may be discussed. Austria is now safe and sure, but how Napoleon will come out of his net of inconsequences I do not know. Russia is laboring to loosen the knots for him. For Austria the loss of Lombardy is a gain, but the lost battles still remain. An alliance between Austria and France would be a terrible danger to Germany, it would re-establish the confederation of the Rhine, and make Napoleon all-powerful.

I must conclude with thanks for the pamphlet "Despots or Revolutionists." That is all over now, and he holds the stirrup for the pope, and will soon crush down revolutionists in Italy. Mazzinian bombs were captured in Milan at the very time of his entry.

The present volume of the duke's memoirs deals with the end of the Italian war, and the beginning of a decade which was to see the predominance of Prussia in Germany and the entire defeat of the French. The duke, who was always giving people good advice, wrote to the prince regent of Prussia shortly after the peace of Villafranca pointing out the way in which he might improve the position of Prussia in Germany, and urging him to adopt a decided policy. The answer of the future emperor needs no justification. The wisdom of the course he pursued in these tortuous times has been abundantly vindicated by the history of later years. But the opening paragraph of his letter will form a fitting conclusion to the events which we have just narrated.

I have owed you a reply for nearly two months, which sounds very remarkable and ungrateful. But it has an excuse and a meaning. Your letter was full of matter—it treated of the past, the present, and the future. From the attitude of Prussia in the recent past you are right in deducing her present isolation, and therefore you wish for action in the present which will raise the isolation to a future predominance; such a view of circumstances deserves the fullest recognition and the most hearty thanks. As far as the past is concerned, had I to live it over again I should act just as I acted during it. I can never persuade myself that I should have acted wisely for the advantage of Germany, Prussia, and Europe, if by threatening France with war in March I had drawn the war upon Germany in order to support the policy of Austria in Italy. I said from the throne that I would support the balance of power in Europe, the security of Germany, and the honor of Prussia. When the news of the ultimatum reached me on April 20, in the very same minute I signed the preparations for war (a fact, for the order lay since the morning unsigned on my table), and invited Germany to follow me. When Ticino and Magenta were left behind and Napoleon did not halt, although the *status quo* was re-established by the evacuation of Piedmont, and therefore it was possible that Austria might be driven back to the Adriatic, and the equilibrium of Europe threatened, I mobilized the army, and invited Germany to concentrate on the Rhine, for which purpose I set the Prussian army in march on July 2. The armistice caused no delay, and the news that peace was signed reached us on July 13.

The letter goes on to show that no reform

in the German federation could be usefully undertaken whilst Germany was jealous of the predominance of Prussia, and that the best hope lay in so strengthening the hands of Prussia that she could speak not only with wisdom but with authority. In a subsequent volume the duke will doubtless reveal to us much of the secret struggles by which this result was attained; but, whatever may be the interest of the narrative, we shall miss what is the principal attraction of the present volume—the vigorous and incisive judgment of the prince consort upon the varying phases of the higher politics of Europe.

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From Murray's Magazine.  
NAOMI.

#### CHAPTER I.

THE houses were high and wide, with flat fronts painted an unobtrusive, brownish drab. There were some ten or twelve in all. They stretched in a line up St. Mary's Hill, a square grass-plot, by courtesy called a garden, in front of each house, and, bounding the gardens, a stone wall of excellent height and stoutness. The wall shut out the sight and sound of the giddy, vulgar world that lived beyond, and saved the front drawing-rooms from over-much dust and sunshine. It was ivy-clad within, lichen-clad without, and the ivy straggled over the wall-top and tossed in the keener, fresher breeze that met it, and nodded indecorously above the heads of passers-by. At regular distances in the line of wall, low, narrow, weather-stained garden doors opened upon the garden squares. From garden door to front door stretched a strip of gravelled pathway—very straight. The front doors were narrow but tall, brass-knocked, genteely painted, and imposing.

St. Mary's Villas were houses with a reputation—with a history of more than mere negative respectability. Here in the forties and fifties, the chief gentry of Dydmouth had hallowed the ground; and when, in the sixties, the gentry had deserted it, moving further away from the growing suburb of lath-and-plaster terraces, cheap lodgings, and offensive shops, still the odor of their gentility remained. This had perhaps proved oppressive to the undesirable plebeian mind. The new tenants who had come in one by one were in every case, in every sense, unexceptionable—untainted by trade, in politics

Conservative, in doctrine orthodox, with a bias against Methodism, surplined choirs, and followers in the kitchen, temperate, but temperate with wine on the table and a spirit-stand in the sideboard cupboard.

Miss Agatha Price and her sister Sophy, who lived at the foot of the hill, were typical ladies of the terrace. Their manners were invariably polite, gently ceremonious; their deportment was correct; their dress was of the best material and soberest tints, it followed the fashion, but followed it slowly, with suitable dignity. Their house was excellently ordered; their servants were well-conducted, black-gowned, white-aproned, neatly capped, deferential; both mistresses and servants trod softly, spoke slowly in subdued tones, and smiled in a chastened way without levity. The ladies lived a quiet, leisurely, not very useful life; but they rose to it at a severely early hour each day, and took their meals and walks and afternoon naps with a rigorous punctuality that gave to their leisure a savor of work and duty. They held strict views and held them strictly, not weakly subject to either persuasion or argument. They rarely talked about their views. Men might discuss opinions—that was fitting; women only *held* them. The gravest matters were not meant for womanly conversation; political talk was undoubtedly masculine, and religious conversation was at all times irreverent and unsuitable. In conversation, as in act and dress and manners, a lady should be a lady—sure of herself but unassertive, above all things unremarked.

Miss Agatha and Miss Sophy had their little circle of friends, old family friends who dressed as suitably, spoke as quietly, thought in all matters as correctly. Only mere acquaintances sometimes held false opinions. And such acquaintances remained acquaintances. Miss Sophy, when she spoke of them, spoke with pathos in her tone. Miss Agatha bowed to them distantly and looked with a prejudiced eye on the set of their gowns, the polish on their door-bells, and the fashion of their Sunday bonnets. Miss Agatha was the practical sister. But Miss Sophy, with a less practical mind, was more often appealed to for advice. She had a sympathetic manner of listening; she had a soft, sympathetic, pathetic voice; when she spoke of herself she spoke with a little air of gentle, regretful reminiscence that was somehow soothing to her hearers. Her younger friends called her "door Miss Sophy;" they confided parts of their love-stories to her when their love-stories were

melancholy and not passionate, and when Miss Agatha was not by.

Miss Agatha and Miss Sophy being what they were, all their ways so satisfactory, all their views so seemingly, their conversation so refined, it was sad that their niece, Naomi, should have taken after them so little. It was particularly sad because Naomi for some months was to live with them. For many years they had been meaning to invite her—she was poor Philip's child—they owed a duty to their brother's child; it was only proper that some time she should come to them; poor Philip would have expected it; no one could say that they did not respect poor Philip's wishes. The invitation had gone forth. Naomi had come. And nearly a year must pass before she would be gone again.

Naomi favored her mother's family, and her mother's family had always been unsatisfactory. She had been brought up by them. She had been brought up to talk constantly, with no dignified reserve, no becoming sobriety of speech, to laugh in a flighty way, to sit with her hands clasped about her knees in the most unladylike of attitudes, to hum secular tunes on Sundays, to draw up the blinds though the sun faced the windows, to throw up the windows though the wind was high, to talk about the play and the relative merits of London actresses, to wear bright-colored gowns made of paltry stuffs, to issue from the garden door with her gloves unbuttoned, to prefer the society of men, and of young men, and to declare it smilingly with unlowered eyes and without a blush.

It was nearly a month now since Naomi had come. From the first her aunts had disapproved of her; every day had but deepened their disapproval. Every day she had surprised them with some fresh iniquity. She had rested her elbows on the table at dinner, had put her hands together and bent them back to lean her cheek against them, and looking unconcernedly towards the head of the table, had asked Miss Agatha, in the presence too of the parlor-maid who was handing the vegetables, "why she was not a Socialist?" She had bought cheap novels with vulgar yellow backs, and had brought them uncovered into the drawing-room. She had carried her breakfast-cup to the open window of the dining-room, had seated herself on the window-sill, and had thought of drinking her coffee there. She had been introduced to young Mr. Nicholson, who lived next door, and the next day

had laughingly addressed him across the garden wall, and, although he had evidently been conscious that such an action on her part was unusual and unbecoming, and had been reluctant to abet her in her disregard for the proprieties, she had succeeded in detaining him for many minutes, had looked up at him with as sweet a glance as though he had been an old friend, and a woman friend, and had made some giddy little joke at which she had laughed quickly and gaily, and at which he had very gravely smiled.

It was of Mr. Nicholson and of Naomi's unsuitable behavior towards him that Miss Agatha and Miss Sophy had been vaguely discoursing all this afternoon. It was their duty to point out to Naomi that her manner was unbecoming — that strangers, who did not know her aunts, might even call it unladylike, might even think her "fast." The task had proved difficult. It was impossible to speak quite clearly on such a subject — clearness was indelicate. To breathe the word "fast" in connection with a niece of their own (even though the word expressed the false supposition of an ignorant and supposititious stranger) was too shocking. They could only speak vaguely in hints and parables. And reproofs so couched somehow failed to arrest Naomi's attention, failed to impress her seriously.

Naomi was standing in an easy attitude beside the window, her head leant a little back against the shutter, her fingers fidgeting with the tassel of the window-blind. She wore a cheap little gown, rust-red in color, and oddly made, with too little width in the skirt and no trim collar-band about the neck — a gown which people in the street glanced at observantly in passing. Her hair, too, was mortifying to her aunts. In itself it was pretty hair, dark and soft and wavy; but it was cut almost short and allowed to fall forward upon her brow in a fashion perhaps artistic — certainly uncouth. She was a pretty girl, but her prettiness differed somehow from the unobtrusive, well-bred prettiness of the girls whom her aunts had known. They had an uneasy feeling that she was too brilliantly pretty to be quite ladylike, quite refined. Her dark eyes were too swift in their glances; her lips expressed too much — perhaps it was her looks, even more than her words, that made her manners seem so free, so unbecoming.

"And there is nothing, Naomi, that gentlemen really dislike so much," reasoned Miss Agatha, her glance bent down

upon her knitting, her voice lowered a little as she pronounced the word "gentlemen," "as a free manner in a lady. It shocks them. We have no idea how much it shocks them. It shocks them inexpressibly."

Naomi was still playing idly with the dangling tassel, and Miss Agatha was not sure that she was listening.

"It shocks them, as I say, inexpressibly," Miss Agatha repeated.

"Oh, poor things!" said Naomi.

There was certainly laughter in the tone; Miss Agatha sat a little more upright, held her knitting a little more stiffly, and watched her stitches with severity. Miss Sophy looked, in an uneasy way, from her sister to her niece. Silence, and especially the silence of displeasure, always fidgeted Miss Sophy; she liked her little world to chat constantly.

"Poor Mr. Nicholson!" said Naomi — "poor dear Mr. Nicholson!"

"Mr. Nicholson," said Miss Agatha severely, "I scarcely like to say it, Naomi, but Mr. Nicholson is — is a young man. You seem, my dear, very strangely to forget that."

Naomi laughed — a flighty, sudden little laugh that made Miss Sophy's brow contract nervously.

"It is not quite — not quite nice," continued Miss Agatha, "to speak in such a familiar way of a man as young as Mr. Nicholson."

"Young!" echoed Naomi. "Was he ever young? Even in bibs and pinafores he was elderly. I am sure of it. He ate sugared sops with the dignity of a patriarch. Oh, I know it — I can see him. What a pity no one painted him — he would have made a Christmas-number picture, a *Graphic* picture, a lovely picture! What a pity!"

Miss Agatha was silent. She would be forbearing to Naomi — forbearance was perhaps a duty — but it certainly could not behave her to continue a grave argument when Naomi chose to jest.

Naomi tossed back her hair from her brow and stood looking across the garden at the grey February sky beyond. She was conscious of feeling a little cross, a little impatient — impatient with Aunt Agatha, with herself, with Mr. Nicholson, with the walled-in garden, with the grey-ness of the day, with all the world. She was vexed with herself for feeling vexed. All this prudishness of Aunt Agatha's should only amuse her — and it did amuse her — it amused her greatly.

"How ought one to behave, Aunt Aga



tha, to a *young* man?" she asked, in a musing tone, not looking round. "Must one efface oneself—quite efface oneself—get into a corner and sit there and study the tips of one's toes? Do you think, now, if I wore a grey gown—wouldn't a grey gown suffice? If I parted my hair in the middle and wore a grey gown, Aunt Agatha, should I still shock him, do you think?"

"It shocks us, Naomi, to hear you talk so flippantly," replied Miss Agatha. "I do not wish to be severe, my dear, but we as girls were never allowed to talk so much, especially to gentlemen. It is not usual. It seems—it seems forward—it does, indeed. Mr. Nicholson yesterday looked quite embarrassed—you talked to him so long."

Naomi's eyes, looking straight at Miss Agatha's, laughed suddenly. But her face flushed a little.

"I think, my dear, that you surprised him," said Miss Sophy mildly.

Naomi's eyes still laughed, but her color was still deepening. She was a little anxious to show that she was quite at ease—only amused, not irritated. She raised her arms and clasped her hands behind her head and threw back her head against them lazily.

"I knew I was surprising him," she said. "I did not mind surprising him—I did not mind it in the least."

Miss Agatha looked at her gravely for a moment, then, in silence, slowly and disapprovingly lowered her eyes.

"I like surprising him," continued Naomi, speaking lightly, yet with some insistence. "It amuses me. He is so serious! so respectable! Was ever any one so respectable?"

The word "respectable" jarred a little on Miss Sophy's sense of fitness. She looked at Naomi uneasily, feeling that a protest was needed, but doubtful how to word it.

"There are the Carus Nicholsons," she said vaguely—"the Nicholsons are cousins of the Carus Nicholsons. And his mother was a Crowther—the Admiral Crowthers. There was no one so much looked up to as old Admiral Crowther. His grave is close to ours—a marble headstone, railed in, almost next to ours. It was pleuris he died of. Such a fine man! He was prayed for in church two Sundays—and the next Sunday every one in black—I remember it so well. And his daughter married Mr. Amos Nicholson. Bankers they are, the Nicholsons."

"Is Mr. Nicholson's name 'Amos'?" asked Naomi.

"No; Mr. Nicholson is Mr. Edward. We have known him all his life. We have always thought very highly of him."

"No one could think anything but highly of him,—no one would ever dare," said Naomi. "And how that lady will admire him—that lady of his choice! Poor Mr. Nicholson! I do hope that he will find her——"

"My dear, I never heard that there was any lady," said Miss Sophy gravely, looking down at her soft black dress and examining the shape of the cuff with a contemplative air. "I think not—I *think* not. I never heard of any lady."

"But there *is* a lady," declared Naomi, with a little frivolous laugh,—*"a very model lady. She wears collars and cuffs—beautiful starched collars and cuffs! She wears a grey gown, and parts her hair, and always blushes when she is spoken to. She writes in the sweetest, finest Italian hand, and all her sentiments are fit for copy-books. She spells man with a big 'M' and woman with an invisible 'w.' She's most admirable. I don't like her—but she's very admirable. I think perhaps he has never met her yet—he is in love with her all the same. Whenever he looks at me he thinks of her—he thinks he is sorry for me, I am so unlike her. He looks at me and looks away—gravely and slowly, as you look, Aunt Agatha—to mark his disapproval. Poor, poor me!"*

Miss Agatha laid down her knitting and sat upright stiffly in her easy chair, and looked with a steady glance at the frivolous girl before her.

"I disapprove of your conduct, certainly, sometimes,—you force us to disapprove," she said, in a quiet and chilling way. "What I try to bear in mind, my dear, is your training, your bringing up. We know that you have labored under disadvantages—living so long in London—and a circle so different from our own. Your grandfather's friends are naturally artist people—that is natural, indeed inevitable, I suppose. And you have lived there now for so many years. Of course we bear that in mind."

"I remember," said Miss Sophy musingly, with a sigh, "staying in London with your mother once—years ago now, when your dear father was still living; and your mother took me to spend an evening with her people. I remember it very well—Aunt Agatha has often heard me speak of it. There was a little party



—a very odd party. Some one, I remember, played a violin. There was one very strange-mannered person, I can see him now — a person with a beard — he nursed his foot whilst he spoke to me. And he put his arm upon my chair — right across the back; I remember it very well. All their manners were most familiar, most free — not at all what one is accustomed to. And their coats! And their hair! I shall always remember it."

Naomi unclasped her hands from behind her head and turned her face towards the window with a quick, impatient movement. It was still with impatience and restlessness that presently she turned again towards her aunts.

"You would never understand, would you?" she asked half fiercely, "that I pine for the sight of a velveteen coat again — my heart almost aches for it. Oh, don't look at me like that — don't! I know all my sentiments are shocking. I know it — never mind saying so again."

"My dear, you are excited!" expostulated Miss Sophy mildly.

"No. Only tired of the sight of broadcloth," said Naomi with a little laugh. "In the presence of velveteen, life is so beautifully simple. Velveteen thinks one's faults most charming — most original. Broadcloth looks at one's virtues superciliously and finds them — thin. Poor Mr. Nicholson! I wonder how he would look in velveteen with his hair grown long. Would his hair curl, Aunt Sophy, do you think?"

But Miss Sophy was glancing nervously at Miss Agatha; Miss Agatha's long thin face expressed silent, dignified displeasure.

"I do not think his hair would curl," said Naomi after a minute, slowly and profoundly. "It's a comfort to think that he is not perfect, that there is something wanting about him. A wonderful comfort!"

Again there was a minute's silence. Miss Agatha sighed. "You are speaking very frivolously, Naomi," said she with a patient air. "I think you scarcely know how foolishly you speak."

"It's the thought of so much wisdom and solemnity," said Naomi. "It oppresses me. One is bound to laugh at Mr. Nicholson — to remind oneself that he's but a mortal. Mr. Nicholson! *What* a name! But it's like him. One would know without telling that he wore top hats, and black kid gloves on week-days. He turns out his toes from a high moral motive. He never smiles except from a

sense of duty. Yes, I knew that I disliked him."

She crossed the room in an aimless way, looked at a picture of grapes and roses and dewdrops on the wall, and wandered aimlessly back again. She put her hands on the rail of Miss Sophy's chair, and bent forward with an odd little smile, half mischievous, half caressing.

"I'm not a very nice niece, am I?" she said sympathetically. "It's horrid for you, isn't it? Never mind! I'm nicer than I seem, Aunt Sophy — inside, you know."

"My dear, we are not finding fault with you," said Miss Sophy hastily. "You are treading on my dress, my dear."

"I can't be a model person," Naomi explained, with a long-drawn sigh; "and I don't want to be. Your dress? No, I'm not touching it. Rummaging your hair? I didn't mean to. You poor thing! Kiss me, and I'll go away."

## CHAPTER II.

THE back gardens of St. Mary's Villas opened into a grass-grown lane; a pretty little countrified lane with a straggling hedge on one side and a view of fields beyond the hedge. Here, in the spring evenings, Mr. Nicholson would sometimes bring his paper, and walk slowly up and down as he read or reflected. In the spring afternoons and evenings Naomi, too, found the house depressing. She issued forth, book in hand, crossed the little green lane, climbed a padlocked gate, and trespassed with untroubled conscience in the fields on the other side.

This sunny April evening Mr. Nicholson was taking his customary stroll. He held his paper in his hands, but his hands behind him; he strolled slowly, his shoulders well back, his head erect, his glance fixed reflectively on the soft blue sky before him, his thoughts intent on business matters, the day's every-day events in town. Suddenly, as he approached the padlocked gate, his glance was attracted earthwards. On the other side of the gate, and close to it, half in the sunshine, half in the shadow of the hawthorn hedge, sat Naomi Price; hatless, jacketless, gloveless, her elbows on the grass, her chin between her hands, an open book on the ground before her. He glanced aside at her; for an instant his grave face wore an expectant look; then he glanced away again, straight before him. She had not turned, and he passed on without addressing her.

But the vision of a girlish figure in a

russet gown and an inelegant attitude had disturbed his sober thoughts of safe investments. He was conscious of a sudden restlessness of mind. He unfolded and folded his paper decisively, and fixed his attention on the paragraph that first caught his eye. The paragraph treated of the evil behavior of one William Baker, charged yesterday with petty larceny; he read the account half through, then forgot that he was reading and let his glance travel again, in an abstracted way, to the blue sky beyond the lane. She must have heard him pass. Yet she had not raised her head, had not looked his way. She had let him pass — and he was glad. Certainly, he was very glad. To assure himself of his gladness, he put his paper once more behind him and reflected as he walked on Naomi's unadmirable qualities and imperfect conduct. She flirted — undoubtedly she flirted. Some men found such girls amusing; he, for his part, could not overcome a habit of regarding all women seriously. His mother he had revered; all other women whom he had ever known he had been able to treat gravely and deferentially, to think of respectfully; Naomi was different from them all. There was levity in all her ways. Her laughter was too frequent; her glance was too swift, too expressive; she talked in a light, exaggerated strain, pointing her speech with little gestures, smiles, and frowns; with sudden effective changes in her tone, and little dramatic pauses that held your attention in spite of your own desire — held it as a woman's talk had scarcely any right to hold it. She had let him pass and had not turned; he was glad that she had not turned.

All the way up the lane he was very sure about his gladness. At the end of the lane he hesitated. Should he stroll back now, as his custom was, or should he take his paper and his thoughts further from home this evening? He stood for a moment, his hands behind him, thinking out the question; then, without duly weighing it, turned down the lane again. This time, surely, she must turn her head. If she turned her head she would surely smile. Yesterday her unexpected smile had excited him unduly — he would like to prove himself more master of himself to-day.

For the last ten minutes Naomi, with her book spread open on the ground, had not read a word. A minute ago she had suddenly become conscious that she was listening, that she was waiting — and waiting with a feeling of eagerness — for

footsteps to come down the lane. Suddenly, as she realized it, she had bent lower over her book, turning the leaves hastily in search of a more absorbing page.

But the absorbing page in a very few moments had ceased to prove engrossing. Unconsciously she was listening again. Down the lane came the sound of returning footsteps, and at the sound her heart beat quicker, in a strange and fluttering way, half fearfully, half happily, wholly unreasonably. She was seized with a desire to flee. She half rose; then, on second thoughts, laughed at her first impulse. Who was Mr. Nicholson that she should run away from him? She need not even raise her eyes from her book; she might let him pass again without even showing that she knew that he was near. But to affect unconsciousness was as foolish as to rise and flee. Any acquaintance but Mr. Nicholson she would accost without a thought, without a moment's silly prudery, simply and naturally — and why not Mr. Nicholson? Was Aunt Agatha succeeding in her many lectures, making her think of men in a silly, vulgar, simpering way, as potential wooers? If Mr. Nicholson *did* think her over-bold, was that important? It was his thought which was at fault. Why should she bend her behavior to his false opinions? On the whole, she preferred his disapproval. She had always said so — she preferred it greatly.

She raised her eyes from her book as he reached the gate, and, turning her head, looked up at him with the sudden smile he found so disconcerting.

"Shall I be prosecuted, do you think, for trespassing?" she asked. And he paused at the gate as in duty bound. It was scarcely duty that constrained him to rest one arm on the topmost bar and to draw such a deep breath of satisfaction as he looked down at her.

"You have found a very pleasant spot," he replied after a moment. "Yes, I fear that you are trespassing — but that need not trouble you. Generally, however, the gate is locked."

"The gate *was* locked," said Naomi with a comical little air of dramatic solemnity. "I climbed it. I meant to climb another. I meant to climb that other gate over there at the other end. But over there there are cows to-night. Are you afraid of cows, Mr. Nicholson?"

Mr. Nicholson's grey eyes smiled in a grave way at the flippant question which he left unanswered.

"Not when they stop feeding," pursued Naomi, "and lift up their heads and their horns and solemnly look at you? No — nor I. But I like to admire their picturesqueness from a distance."

Mr. Nicholson was looking away from her over the fields where the cows, with gentle down-bent heads, were scattered feeding. A little breeze blew across from the west; all the air was sweet with the scent of hawthorn.

"What a perfect evening it is," said he presently, "and how still! It is hard to remember that the town is so near. With our faces this way we are in the country."

Naomi had risen and was standing by the gate, looking silently in the direction in which he was looking. Except for the soft twitter of birds, the light rustle of twig and leaf, everything was very still. Perhaps it was the stillness of the evening which cast a spell about her. She felt as sometimes in rare moments she had felt when low music had thrilled her and held her bound. It was only with an effort that she broke the spell and was frivolous again.

"Yes — we are in the country," she sighed regretfully. "And in London presently the gas will be lit in all the shops."

"You are not fond of the country, Miss Naomi?"

"Not when it's very green, Mr. Nicholson. Not when it has a *vegetably* look. I like the country when Turner paints it. Then it has an air of town about it."

"That's a curious criticism, is it not?"

"Of the country, or of Turner?"

"Well, of both. Your criticisms sound original."

"I hope so. Why should I bore myself and you by quoting criticisms that are customary? Are all your criticisms always customary, Mr. Nicholson?"

Her eyes, as she spoke, looked suddenly into his with a merry gleam of confiding laughter. He was conscious that his heart beat quicker whenever she glanced at him so unexpectedly; he could not meet her glance and be as calm as was consistent.

"I fancy that all my notions, on all subjects, would be, as you say, Miss Naomi, more customary than yours. I am much less sure than you of the virtues of independent thought. I think one generally finds that unusual notions are original only in some twist of wrongness."

"Would you like the world without its twists of wrongness?"

"I should prefer it — greatly."

"And I should hate it. I should be

bored to death. Think of it — a world perfectly correct, with no by-lanes leading nowhere, and all its human nature starched!"

He was looking at her gravely, with a contemplative yet half-reluctant glance. Her words held his attention; they might have been words of wisdom of which he could approve, so heedfully he listened.

"You find it dull here?" he suggested after a moment's thought.

Naomi's eyes, looking frankly into his, laughed merrily again. "It was you, not I, who made that application," said she. "I did not imply that I found the world here perfect."

"But you find it quiet after London?"

"Oh, yes, I find it quiet — oppressively quiet very often; Aunt Agatha and Aunt Sophy sit so very still! — the very sight of them makes me need to fidget. Aunt Agatha's mental forefinger is always up, saying 'hush' to every one. The servants speak so softly, move so softly, do everything so softly, that I feel sometimes as though something loud *must* happen or I should suffocate and die. Do you know that sort of feeling?"

Mr. Nicholson smiled in quite a sudden way. "Not at all," he owned.

"Now at home," continued Naomi musingly, "nothing ever happens quietly. If Jenny (Jenny is a very jolly little girl — the little girl who does the work) if Jenny is only washing up the breakfast things she likes every one to know all about it. Every one does everything with a sociable, cheerful clatter. I suppose I miss that — I suppose I miss London too. I miss London dreadfully!"

"But what is it exactly that you miss?"

"I scarcely know what. I seem to miss everything. I like the bigness and the freedom. I like the airiness. Yes, I know it sounds strange to you to talk of London's airiness, but here in the country sometimes I feel that I cannot breathe. I like everything in London. I like the early mornings. I like the sunsets across the roofs; I don't care a bit for your country sunsets, but a sunset across miles and miles of houses is a very different thing indeed. I like the lovely roar of the Strand when the theatres are coming out. I like the shop-windows — *all* the windows — and the gaslight — and the look of the river when the lamps are lit along the bridges — and the beautiful rumble of cabs — and the voices of men behind the omnibuses. I look out from my window here in the mornings and long for chimney-tops. I like chimney-tops so very

much better than hawthorn bushes, Mr. Nicholson."

He was never quite sure whether she was in earnest in all the strange things she said, or whether she was laughing at herself, or aiming at amusing him. She spoke with apparent feeling; and when she spoke so, there was a note somewhere in her tone that affected him most strangely, in a way not at all to be explained, and made him a little unsure of himself and of what he might say and do. She was leaning, like him, one arm upon the gate; but although her face was turned towards him, she was looking past him musingly. He glanced away from her at the shadows of the hedge upon the grass, and breathed more freely. Yet after a moment, he glanced back at her again. Near her thus a man might make love to her and scarcely be to blame. To touch her hand, to be looked at with a longer look might become a necessity—a passion. He could imagine the danger well—for some men.

He had lingered long enough. Raising his arm slowly from the gate, he drew himself into an upright attitude. He glanced in the doubtful way along the lane. But it was a gloomy path; the shadow of the back-garden walls lay right across it. He glanced back again at Naomi who was standing in the sunshine. And at that moment, Naomi looked at him with one of her swift, straight glances, and spoke again.

"Let us go for a little walk," she said. "Talking of London makes one restless—let us go for a little walk and walk it off."

It was only for a moment that he hesitated, but the moment was long enough to make Naomi feel the enormity of her suggestion. Even as she had made the suggestion she had known how it would strike him. But there was a sense of triumph, of elation in saying to Mr. Nicholson the thing which she should not say, the thing which seemed at the moment the most unbecoming thing to say and which must most surprise him.

A week or two ago he had scarcely disguised his disapproval. Now, when he looked long at her, the disapproval was somewhere in the background of his glance, and his grey eyes met hers with a light neither calm nor critical, a light that set her heart beating fast, deepened the color in her cheeks and made her desire desperately to look away, to be silent—and otherwise "silly." She would not yield to the impulse. She resented the truth, which in spite of herself she was

forced to acknowledge to herself, that in Mr. Nicholson's presence she could not be at ease, that she took thought what she should say and what she should do, and that those things which all her life she had said and done simply and spontaneously she said and did now with an effort, after a second's hesitation, half defiantly.

He was over the gate in a moment and at her side. Then he stood regarding her as though there was something a little wrong.

"You would like—a hat?" he suggested.

"A hat?" repeated Naomi with quiet seriousness—"I think there is nothing I should dislike so much. We will keep to the fields—then we shall meet no one. Don't you like to feel the breeze blowing your hair about?—I do. That is the one advantage of the country over London—one cannot very well walk hatless through the London streets; though, if one strolls through a by-street with Mark, he often takes off his hat absently whilst he is talking to one, and carries it behind him, and forgets all about it, I believe, until it strikes him that every one who passes him stares."

"Who is Mark?" asked Mr. Nicholson rather hastily.

"Mark Powell. You must have heard of him!"

"No."

"I am afraid you ought to feel sorry, then—I'm afraid it argues yourself unknown. He's a Socialist—he'll be a great leader by-and-by—he holds meetings, and crowds and crowds of men come—working men, most of them, but most of them in the winter time with no work to do. I often go to Mark's meetings."

"You!"

"Oh, yes, very often. It's a thing to move you, a great meeting like that—the great crowd of earnest, rugged, attentive faces and Mark's speaking. I don't think Mark is a great orator; some people think he is because the men listen to him in such a way, but I think the power he has is something more than that—more than just the power of oratory—something deeper, much. I know how I feel; I always feel that there is something in Mark that is in touch with the better part of me—I expect the men feel that too. He does not speak so very fluently, but every word he says rings *true*. It's his truthness which is his power, I think. When he only looks quietly in his grave way at the crowd before he begins to speak, you feel

his power — it stirs you somehow. You feel that all the shams and smooth hypocrites and secret oppressions of the world have pretty well had their day; you feel that truth and right are so strong that they are bound to triumph. You feel that truth has a grip on men's hearts that nothing else has. I say all this, but you can't understand — you ought to hear him."

"I would rather hear *you*," said Mr. Nicholson, smiling slightly. And the smile or the words or the tone somehow jarred upon her. She regretted that she had fallen into serious talk; with the thoughts and feelings that appealed to her better nature he had no part nor lot — she had realized that again and again before to-day.

"What is this — this friend of yours besides a demagogue?" asked Mr. Nicholson.

The gentle patronage of the tone provoked her to sudden irritation. She walked on at a quickened pace, a bright little flush of color in each cheek, her eyes lowered, but her head held defiantly erect.

"Do you mean 'What is his profession?'" she returned presently. "That is what no one who knows Mark ever thinks of asking — it matters so little — it matters nothing. He earns a living somehow; I think he writes sometimes — sometimes he gets secretary work to do — sometimes some committee can afford to pay him for the lectures that he gives. He often wears very bad coats and hats — and I don't think he always dines. But on the days when he gets no dinner some one hungrier gets an unexpected meal —"

There was a little tremor in her voice. She stopped suddenly.

"He lives down at Poplar," she continued after a pause, in a quieter, slower tone. "I believe one can live on very little down at Poplar. But one gets old there quickly — if one lives as Mark lives. I feel it hard to realize other people's sufferings except bluntly; Mark doesn't. I believe he lives with a heart-ache always nowadays. Sometimes, do you know, I think that that thin, grave face of his, with its deep eyes that have given up smiling lately, and its lines — all the deep lines that grow deeper every year — I think sometimes that Mark's face sort of symbolizes the life of East-end London."

In spite of her intention, she had fallen again into a tone of eager seriousness.

"You are enthusiastic, are you not?" said Mr. Nicholson indulgently. And

again Naomi felt herself brought down suddenly to a lower level of thought and feeling.

"Yes, I am enthusiastic," she answered, "and I am glad. One's enthusiasm, it seems to me, is sometimes the only thing of which one can be proud. I am always glad to remember that Mark's goodness stirs me."

A minute's silence, whilst the two walked on side by side together, looking straight before them. Mr. Nicholson's air was admirably calm, judicial, and superior.

"I think that any excessive enthusiasm," said he slowly and reflectively at length, "is apt — to be a pity."

"And I disagree," cried Naomi warmly.

"Oh, I disagree utterly! In times of enthusiasm, it seems to me, one gets flashes of insight that one could not get in quite calm moments. One catches for a second at some truth which has always been, but which one's soul was too torpid to see; and after that — well at any rate one is *different* after that — one has new capabilities — if one falls, one must fall lower after that. I seem to be preaching you a sermon," she added, with a sudden change of tone. "You did not expect me to turn sermonizer, did you?"

He certainly could not say he had expected it. But neither could he feel that it had surprised him greatly. He felt that he was prepared for anything in Naomi except those well-bred, gentle, retiring modes of thought and speech and manner, that had always seemed to him the inseparable attributes of a lady, young or old. It seemed only consistent with his thought of Naomi that she should be too earnest as she was too frivolous. She would never choose the happy mean in anything.

"I do not wish to cast a slur on your — your Socialistic hero, Miss Naomi," said he, bringing her back from high-flown abstractions to practical life again, "but you will permit me to doubt the good influence of such a leader."

"You do not know Mark," replied Naomi coldly.

"No — only what you tell me. Pardon me, but I think the influence of such men is an unmixed evil. I think they do incalculable mischief. They rouse up discontent at ills which they know to be inevitable. They are not employers themselves — and they care nothing for the interest of the employer — in nine cases out of ten they care nothing for the interests of the laborer either. They crave for public attention — and they gain it."



"You do not know them," repeated Naomi in a quiet voice.

"I know enough of them," replied Mr. Nicholson with an air of excellent and conscious temperance, "to desire to know no more. I cannot say that I have much sympathy with this new outcry every winter about the poor. We have had times of commercial depression before to-day, and the working classes have suffered, naturally, as all other classes have suffered, but they have been content to be patient and reasonable and to wait for things to mend; all this sensational writing and talking is a new fashion, and a fashion with which, I confess, I have very little patience. There is bound to be poverty — there are bound to be men out of work sometimes. And who *are* the unemployed, taking them as a class? Who are they? Ninety-nine out of every hundred are men who *will* not work, loafers and roughts — more than half are utterly incompetent, men who cannot reasonably expect to find employ — the other half are drunkards — and almost all, you will find, are utterly improvident."

"And beyond the pale of sympathy; yes, the case seems proved," said Naomi in his own tone of eminent temperance and common sense. "Are you — quite sure of your statistics?"

He glanced at her keenly for a moment.

"I am only saying, Miss Naomi, what any one will tell you," said he with a certain accent of displeasure.

Naomi paused before answering. "I do not need any one to tell me," she said then, simply. "I know; and I know you are wrong. I think perhaps I have seen more of the unemployed than you have done — and I have not found that want of work is a test of a man being saint or sinner. Even if it were a test, what then? Both saints and sinners have an inconvenient habit of feeling hungry about dinner-time, and of shivering without fire on a December day. You make me talk bitterly when you talk like that. I have seen a good deal sometimes, in the winter times, of the unemployed and their families. I have gone about with Mark — gone to their homes to see them — often — often and often."

"He ought not to have taken you," said Mr. Nicholson shortly and decisively.

"Ought not? Why not?" echoed Naomi.

"I do not think that scenes of extreme poverty, squalor, and misery, are fit scenes into which to take a lady."

"Mark feels differently."

"Yes. I should expect him to do so."

"You say that as though the difference implied some lack in him. Mark's views of ladyhood seem to me to be truer than yours, Mr. Nicholson. Mark has a way of assuming the existence of a soul in every one — even in a lady. He never expects one to be lower than one's better self. He never in his life asked me whether I objected to smell foul smells and to climb dirty stairs into dirtier rooms. He never — Let us turn back, shall we? Let us talk of safer topics on which we can agree."

"Willingly. Of what shall we talk?"

Naomi laughed — an impatient, not very merry little laugh.

"It's a question, is it not?" said she. "Let us talk of something that does not matter — to us or to any one. Let us talk of sunsets — and hawthorn bushes."

#### CHAPTER III.

APRIL was over; May's blue skies and sweet perfumes and soft breezes bore a promise already of sunny June; and Naomi had had one month more in which to reveal to her aunts and her aunts' friends the indecorous bent of her nature.

In those four weeks Naomi had lost something of her old gaiety of spirits, her careless ease, her lightheartedness. She said as shocking things as ever, but she said them in a different way, almost as though with forethought and intention. She had moods of unreasonable excitement, and moods of equally unreasoning depression. She would gossip with the servants to-day with a familiarity terrible to Miss Agatha, and to-morrow be even more silent than was consistent with dignified politeness. To-day she would be found talking and laughing in the wildest, gayest spirits with Mr. Nicholson across the garden wall, and to-morrow, if he chanced to call, she would sit without a word, scarcely responding to his well-meant efforts at pleasant conversation.

And one night a very strange thing happened.

Naomi had retired to her room somewhat earlier than usual. It was half an hour afterwards, perhaps, that Miss Sophy, who had just come up stairs, crossed the landing from Miss Agatha's bedroom and tapped gently at the girl's door. After a moment's pause, she opened the door softly and looked in. The room was in darkness; but Miss Sophy held a bedroom candle in her hand, and the candle-light discovered Naomi standing by the open window. The window was open wide;



the cool air swept in and fluttered the curtains and made Miss Sophy's candle gutter in a disreputable fashion in which no candle held by Miss Sophy had ever guttered in its life.

"I came to look at your water-bottle," explained Miss Sophy, shutting the door behind her, and regarding her guttered candle with a grave and regretful air. "Charlotte has been careless about the water-bottles lately. Aunt Agatha's has quite a sediment; let me look at yours. I must speak to Charlotte in the morning."

Miss Sophy had put down her candle on the dressing-table; she brought the water-bottle across the room to the light. But, crossing the room, she fancied suddenly that Naomi was wiping away what looked like tears. She forgot the engrossing question of "sediments," set down the bottle without examining it, and came to the window where Naomi was standing.

"My dear, you will get cold," said she in a gentle tone.

Yes, Naomi had undoubtedly been crying. There were tear-stains beneath her eyes; she had the tense, strange glance of one whose nerves have been too highly strung, and who cannot, however valiant may be her effort, come back at once to the tragedy of water-bottle sediments and guttered candles and the risk of taking cold on a soft May night.

"Look at the sky, Aunt Sophy," said the girl in her tense, still voice.

Miss Sophy raised her eyes obediently. The night was cloudless; the calm, "clear, star-sown vault of heaven," seemed very far away.

"There must be a moon—a new moon—somewhere," said Miss Sophy, vaguely but pleasantly. "You oughtn't to be standing here, Naomi—not like this—in the night air. Why haven't you gone to bed?"

But Naomi, with her head leant back against the shutter, stood silent, still looking up with tense yet dreamy eyes at the far-away night sky.

"You've not been crying, dear?" questioned Miss Sophy, in a gentle, nervous tone, glancing observantly once more at the girl's tear-stained face, and glancing nervously away. But Naomi made no attempt to deny the tears.

"Yes, I've been crying," she admitted simply. "Crying because I am like I am—not a nicer person."

Miss Sophy looked at the girl with a very softened glance. Tears, if the tears were gentle, not passionate, were a form of penitence that always touched Miss

Sophy. She could not deny that Naomi had cause enough for weeping, yet inconsistently she tried to comfort her. She put out a thin, white, shrivelled hand, and stroked the girl's sleeve consolingly. Naomi was still looking away out of the window; her eyes were bright with some strange excitement; her voice, when she spoke, seemed to have lost its sweet, softly modulated notes.

"The sky," said she, "makes one tell the truth about oneself to oneself. I don't like the truth, Aunt Sophy, any more—not any more, not any longer—now. It makes my heart ache. One does not like to be such a failure—so different from what one meant to be. It made me cry. I meant to be—a better woman—different—better! I meant to care for things, to be sorry and glad; and I care for nothing. There are people suffering, sorrowing; and I cannot care. And people are being noble, being good and true and noble; and I cannot care. And to-night I know it and cry, and to-morrow I shall know it, and try *not* to know it."

There was scarcely anything of passion in her manner as she spoke; but her tense tone and strange words flustered Miss Sophy and checked her desire to be sympathetic. Naomi's tears were only part of her oddness, not tears of penitence for her oddness. Miss Sophy removed the caressing hand from the girl's white sleeve, and spoke in a less pathetic tone, though still soothingly.

"I would go to bed, dear, if I were you," she advised. "You're excited; and you're getting cold. What have you been doing?"—with a glance aside at an open blotting-book on the dressing-table—"writing letters—up here? I wouldn't write letters in my bedroom, dear, if I were you, at this time of night. I must close the window, or my candle will gutter when I open the door again."

Miss Sophy shut the window as she spoke.

"Go to bed, like a good girl," she recommended sensibly. "Yes—look at that sediment in your water-bottle! Charlotte is not careful about filtering the water first; I wish you would tell me, Naomi, if it occurs again. Good-night, my dear."

And Miss Sophy, candle in hand, went away to confide to Miss Agatha the fact that Naomi had been in tears, and that Naomi's explanation of the motive of her tears was altogether unsatisfactory.

And Naomi, left alone, turned away from the window and took up a letter

which was lying unfinished on the table. It was too dark now for her to read what she had written, but, without reading, she tore the sheet across, and put down the torn pieces on the table with a sigh—a sigh that was half a sob. She had tried to-night to write to Mark—tried and failed. Mark had always believed the best of her, she had tried to write according to his faith; but suddenly in the middle of her letter she had paused; all at once she had realized that she was expressing thoughts and wishes which were part of her past, but were filling no part of her present. She had pushed the letter away from her and risen hastily, putting out her candle and throwing open her window, with a sudden desperate need for more air, more freedom; and standing at the window, looking out into the darkness, looking up at the calm, quiet, starlit sky, she had, as she had said, told the truth about herself to herself. All that had been best in her—all that had been noblest in her—all that Mark had believed in in her, she was leaving far behind. New personal needs, ignoble but passionate, were standing between her and her old ideals. The remembrance of how her heart had beat yesterday when Mr. Nicholson had stood near her and held her hand, had more power to sway her than the remembrance of all Mark's noblest speeches. The foolish joy that thrilled her when Mr. Nicholson's eyes looked deep into hers and half reluctantly yet softly smiled, had crowded out of her heart her old feeling of fellowship in others' joys and pains. To see him at least once a day—to let him for a moment hold her hand in his, to meet his smile, to feel his presence; that was her "good." Her "ill" was for a day to pass, and miss him all the day. He did not honor her in his thoughts as Mark honored her; her "high" was his "low;" what was best in her seemed to him most faulty; he cared for her for her prettiness' sake, for her smile's sake, for some trick of voice or manner that in spite of himself had caught his fancy; cared for her in spite of his own desire, in spite of his common sense, in spite of her better self. Yet to know that he cared for her, even so, seemed often happiness enough, a happiness that filled the day. It was a poor happiness, but it held her in bondage; it shut out all older interests, all older, better needs; it possessed her soul. Half despising Mr. Nicholson, knowing that with one side of his nature he despised her too, still she loved him—and

love contented her. How could she write to Mark who believed her good?

Miss Sophy had broken in upon her thoughts. Now that Miss Sophy was gone, she tore up the half-written letter slowly and hopelessly, and opened the window again. The stiff, neat, excellently furnished room, with its polished mahogany, its four slate-grey walls, seemed to suffocate her; she could think better when she need not see it, when she could feel the free out-of-door air in her face and look up at the great calm sweep of sky overhead—the sky that was shining down on Mark, shining down on all those old friends at home—artists, scribblers, reformers, what not—old friends who took life too lightly or too gravely, laughed too rarely or too often, wore the velvet of Bohemia or broadcloth with too beggarly a nap, but whose lives had all some touch of nobleness, of high endeavor, and whose human sympathies were quick and wide. Thinking of home, she could see things in their truer light again; she could look at the passionate, emotional life she had been leading lately and know it for a lower life. Even now, in this fever time of love, she was not deceived about the quality of the love she felt; it was based on nothing—an unaccountable thing, that had sprung up she knew not how, and grown she knew not why, and that 'by-and-by must pass. Looking forward calmly, she knew that it must pass. And yet, because she knew it, she dreaded to look forward; her love was a poor thing, not love as she had dreamt of love, read of love, believed in love, but her heart sickened when she thought of life without it. She could not give it up!—she could not give it up!

And yet—

The clear, calm night sky stretched away far above the silent lanes and fields—tender, tranquil—

A world above man's head, to let him see  
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,  
How vast, yet of what clear transparency;  
How it were good to live there, and breathe free;  
How fair a lot to fill  
Is left to each man still.

and something of the spirit of the heavens seemed to fall upon the girl as she stood looking upwards. Passion was calmed away. Her strongest need was not to love and be loved, but to be good, to be true—true to her highest instincts, true to "the best" in her, that "best" that Mark had believed in, and appealed to always. She must justify Mark's faith in

her. She must — she would — live nobly according to her lights. She *must* get away from self; she *must* care again if others were glad or sorrowful — care as she used to care about Mark's poor people — if that poor sad-eyed, thin-faced girl in the hospital whom he had sent her to see and help was setting her life right again, if there was work to do this summer, if next winter promised to be less hard than last; she *must* care, she *must* get back to that wider life, those wider sympathies; she must — she would.

The grey, early morning light was creeping in between the chinks of Miss Agatha's green blinds next morning when Miss Agatha awoke an hour earlier than her wont, and awoke, as she was unaccustomed to awake, with a sudden start. The door had creaked loudly. Naomi, with the door held open, was standing on the threshold of the room.

Miss Agatha sat upright, looking a little startled and bewildered.

"Naomi! My dear, what is the matter?" she asked, in a tone of mingled expostulation and concern.

"May I come in, Aunt Agatha?"

"Come in. It must be very early, Naomi. What is the matter?"

The girl came forward into the room. "Aunt Agatha," she said earnestly, "I came to tell you — that I am going home. I wanted to tell you as soon as I could. I want to go home now — to-day."

Miss Agatha sat looking at her in amazement — amazement too great even for displeasure.

"Go home?" she echoed.

"I cannot stay any longer," said Naomi falteringly, in a tone almost childish in its helplessness. "Let me go, Aunt Agatha. Don't try to persuade me. I have been thinking about it all the night. Don't try to turn me from it. Let me go now — to-day."

"Certainly, if you wish. We will talk about it a little later. The servants are not yet up; it cannot be much more than six o'clock. I am afraid, Naomi, you have disturbed Aunt Sophy, moving about so early. I cannot talk to you at this time in the morning; down-stairs, when prayers are over, we will discuss the question. It is a very sudden determination. I am sorry we have not been able to make you happy here. We will talk about it after breakfast. My dear, please to go away quietly. Aunt Sophy sleeps very lightly; she is never accustomed to be called till half past seven. Perhaps you had better leave the door upon the latch."

Two hours later, when Miss Agatha and Miss Sophy descended punctually at eight o'clock to prayers, crisp toast and eggs, Naomi, although she had been guilty of the solecism of having arisen before the servants, had not yet arrived in the dining-room.

"Ring the breakfast-bell again," said Miss Agatha, as she rose from her knees and took her place before the urn. "Miss Naomi did not hear the first bell, perhaps."

"Miss Naomi went out, I think, 'm," ventured the parlor-maid, in an approved tone of grave deference.

Miss Sophy was lingering a moment at the window. At that moment the door in the garden wall was opened by some one in the road outside, who held it open a little way as though hesitating whether or not to enter; Miss Sophy caught a glimpse of a puffed, cuffless red brown sleeve and a gloveless hand; an indistinct murmur of voices came borne across the garden through the open window; then the garden door shut with a click, and the voices were lost again.

Miss Agatha and Miss Sophy were very silent through half their meal; but over their second cups of coffee they began to talk of Naomi, and fell into a very serious conversation.

"And I cannot help feeling," concluded Miss Agatha, as she rose from the table, "that if Naomi wishes to go, we had better not oppose her wishes. I do not like to say anything against the child — after all, we must remember that she is poor Philip's daughter — but she is not like us, not like any of our family. I think, perhaps, if she wishes to go, we should let her go."

"And yet it's a pity," said Miss Sophy lingeringly. "It seems a pity, Agatha, just now. I dare say it is only my idea," she added apologetically; "but lately I have thought sometimes that Mr. Nicholson had taken a sort of — a sort of fancy to Naomi. It seems a pity that she should go away — just now."

There was a minute's silence whilst Miss Agatha looked down musingly at the housekeeping keys she held, and Miss Sophy stood watching her nervously.

"It may be only my fancy, Agatha," said Miss Sophy hastily, "but he pays her attention. He certainly pays her attention. You too must have noticed that."

"Yes," agreed Miss Agatha slowly, "I have noticed it. But Mr. Nicholson is so sensible — not likely to be imprudent. And it *would* be imprudent, Naomi is so — so unlike any well-bred girl. I do not

think he is likely to make such a grave mistake as that."

"It would be such a good thing for her," said Miss Sophy regretfully.

"A very unhappy thing for him," said Miss Agatha, moving away.

In the mean time, on the other side of the ivy-covered wall, Naomi and Mr. Nicholson were strolling slowly, and more and more slowly—up and down St. Mary's Hill.

The road was quiet. Only at very long intervals a milkman, late on his round, or a countrywoman bearing baskets with fruit or vegetables, would disturb the solitude. There was a scent of mignonette borne on the soft air from some garden border—the morning air was warm already.

As Miss Agatha went away with her keys to the kitchen, Naomi reached the garden door and stopped. Mr. Nicholson stood still too. Neither was speaking, neither had spoken for many moments; but the silence between them was intense with the remembrance of the words that had last been spoken, and the expectation of the words that next must come. She put out her hand against the door. But she stood facing him, her eyes with a great fear in them raised to his, beseeching him with passionate urgency against the words he meant to say.

"Naomi, you must hear me," he urged in pleading yet decisive tones. "You have let me say so much, you must hear me to the end."

Only her eyes answered him. Her eyes spoke a language passionate but incoherent. They besought him to be silent, and yet they tempted him to speak. She raised the latch of the garden door, but as she raised it he put out his hand restrainingly and took hers with decision in his own.

"Naomi, you must listen to me," he declared. "You owe it to me."

She yielded the hand he took; she drew a deep breath, half of passionate regret, half of more passionate happiness, and stood passively before him.

"What I said just now," he continued eagerly, his glance kindling, his heart beating fast as he looked down at her, "is the truth, Naomi. I love you. You must have *known* I loved you. You do not believe in my love—what can I do, what can I say to convince you?"

"Yes, I do believe," said Naomi faintly. Her voice was unlike her own; her heart was beating so wildly that to speak at all was difficult. "I believe—but, don't be angry with me, it will pass, you

will forget. I'm not the sort of girl you should have fallen in love with. I'm sorry I came—I didn't know. When I go away I shall pass out of your life; you will forget again, you'll be glad I went away—not yet, but *sometime* you'll be glad."

There was something of reason in what she said; he realized it. It was what he had said to himself again and again, day after day, for many weeks past. A week or two ago—even now in sane business moments—he could look forward hopefully to the forgetfulness that might come with absence. But this was not a moment of supreme sanity, he dreaded nothing at this moment so much as the possibility of his own future indifference.

"I do not mean to forget you," he said steadily, holding her hand more closely as she tried to withdraw it from his clasp. "Not unless you can tell me that you do not love me. You cannot tell me that."

A long silence. He stood looking at her steadfastly.

"Tell me that," he continued softly.

And again there was a long moment's pause.

"Naomi," said he, still more softly, "if we love one another why should we put away happiness so lightly? It is not such a common thing. After all it is the best thing we are likely to get in life."

Naomi had drawn away her hand. She looked at him quickly now, with an eager protest on her lips; but the protest died away unspoken. His eyes had spoken to hers in the soft, passionate, persuasive language of love; and last night's visions, this morning's reiterated resolves were all forgotten. Suddenly he bent and kissed her.

It was half an hour later, perhaps, that Naomi came slowly up the front garden path; and Miss Sophy, sitting alone in the dining-room, wondered at her slow step and quiet air. The girl came through the hall, and after a minute entered the dining-room and came slowly towards the window at which Miss Sophy sat.

Miss Sophy looked up, with a vague but agitated feeling that something unusual must have happened. Naomi was unlike herself; her face was very pale, her eyes were bright—too bright—bright without the suspicion of a smile, without any touch of softness or happy eager expectation; she was quiet—it was unlike Naomi to be so quiet.

She stood still just opposite Miss Sophy's chair, but looked away out of the window as she spoke. She spoke in so

dull a tone that it was a moment before Miss Sophy took in the meaning of her joyful tidings.

"Mr. Nicholson has asked me to marry him," she said; she paused for a moment, the words seemed to come in a labored way. "I am engaged to him," she added.

For a moment Miss Sophy sat and looked at her in bewilderment. Then she rose up hurriedly and came nearer her.

"Naomi, my dear child — I am glad!" she exclaimed.

Naomi stood looking away with no answering smile, looking out across the garden at the ivy on the wall-top with a dull, unseeing glance.

"I cannot tell you how glad I am," said Miss Sophy, her mild eyes beaming. "It never seemed right, Naomi, your living in London like that, knowing such strange people, with such strange ways too. Yes, I know they were good to you, dear, we won't say anything against them, you were fond of them, I know. But they were not the sort of people one cares about. It never seemed to me quite right."

"Does this seem right?" said Naomi, turning her face slowly, with a curious, very mirthless little smile. Then, suddenly, as Miss Sophy took her hands, she drew them away with a short, sharp sob. "Don't let us talk of what is wrong or what is right," she said; "what is the use? what is the good? Nothing is right for me, any more."

SHELDON CLARKE.

From *The Nineteenth Century*.

#### THE WORKS OF HENRIK IBSEN.

HENRIK IBSEN is a solitary man. For twenty-five years he has lived in self-imposed exile from his native country of Norway. No lands call him master; no household calls him its head. In his wanderings over Europe he goes into no society, and in his many temporary abodes he takes nothing with him that he calls his own. A friend charged with messages to him in Rome could only find him after much patient searching, and though well known to many by sight he has no intimate friends.

I live to myself [he says], without friends. Friends are a costly indulgence; they lay on us obligations of speech or silence, like parties in politics. I believe in no such obligations. I belong to no party and wish to belong

to none. I will sacrifice my feelings to the claims of no organized mass, be it Party, Society, or State. From our early youth we are all brought up to be citizens instead of human beings, but we belong in reality to humanity rather than to the State. The expression of our own individuality is our first duty, not its subordination to the interests of the community. I, at least, have no talents as a citizen, the leader of a school, or a member of a party; and there must be thousands like me.

Up to the age of thirty-six Ibsen lived as an ordinary member of society; he is now nearly sixty-two. The first part of his life was not happy. His father became insolvent when Henrik was a child of eight years old, and his early youth was clouded with extreme poverty. His first start in life was made at the age of sixteen as a chemist's apprentice; it was not a soothing career for a fiery and discontented youth. He wrote a tragedy in his hours of leisure and had it printed pseudonymously at his own expense. It was on the subject of *Catiline*. He came to be glad to sell the edition for what it would fetch as waste paper, and to buy a dinner with the proceeds. He always looked forward to going to the university, but Christiania did not greatly please him when at last he got there. He read hard, but not for any course in particular, and when Ole Bull, the violinist, offered him a post in his new theatre at Bergen he gladly took it. He was there for five years. In 1857 he married Susanna Thoresen, whose mother was a Norwegian authoress of note, and settled in Christiania with a post in the theatre similar to the one he had held in Bergen. In 1864 he left Norway. His life, uneventful up till then, has remained for the outside world, and apart from his work, equally uneventful down to the present day. But his life cannot be separated from his labors. His writings are his life. They are not conjecturally autobiographic, but literally and designedly so.

Everything that I have written [he says] is most intimately connected with what I have experienced or have not experienced. Each new poem has served for me the purpose of purifying and enlightening the mind; for one is never without a certain share in and responsibility towards the society to which one belongs. This is what made me write the following lines: —

At leve er Krig met Trolde  
Hjertets og Hjernens Hvalv;  
At digte — det er at holde  
Dommedag over sig selv.\*

Life is a war with spirits  
In the vault of heart and brain,  
And writing poetry is but to hold  
The judgment day over one's self.



It is not surprising to find that a man with so grave—one may almost say, so grim—a view of his own genius seeks for solitude not from choice, but from necessity.

When I am writing [he says] I must be alone; if I have the eight characters of a drama to do with I have society enough; they keep me busy: I must learn to know them. And this process of making their acquaintance is slow and painful. I make, as a rule, three casts of my dramas, which differ considerably from each other. I mean in characteristics, not in the course of the treatment. When I first settle down to work out my material I feel as if I had got to know my characters on a railway journey; the first acquaintance is struck up, and we have chatted about this and that. When I write it down again I already see everything much more clearly, and I know the people as I should if I had stayed with them for a month at a watering place. I have grasped the leading points of their characters and their little peculiarities, but I might yet make a mistake in important points. At last, in the final cast, I have reached the boundary of my acquaintances: I know my people from close and lasting intercourse; they are my trusted friends, who have no surprises in store for me; as I see them now so shall I always see them.

His work shows the results of this painful and laborious devotion. His characters are creations; they could not, at any turn of the play, do anything but what Ibsen records of them. They are living creatures. Again:—

My starting-point [he says] is a certain idea struggling into shape; whether the idea be clothed in modern or historic dress is at bottom quite indifferent to me; just at present modern life is nearer to me, as in my younger years were the historic times. The result is often essentially different from the idea; my starting-point and my finish are not the same, any more than are dreams and realities. Suppose you had read and heard a great deal about a certain town, and at last you stood before it; well, just as the impression you brought with you changes into the reality when seen with unclouded vision, just as the reality dominates the dream, so the poem—which is for me the reality—dominates the vague and wavering idea that at first filled me. But in after days, when I can calmly gaze on my work, I see the connection between my poem and my life, that was invisible to me before; and the whole drama only appears to me as a moment in my spiritual development.

"He labors very slowly, writes and rewrites his works until they appear in a neat-looking manuscript without a single correction, each page as smooth and firm

as a marble plate, on which the tooth of time can leave no impression."

Ibsen was not a precocious genius. He began writing early, it is true, but he wrote to order—one play a year—for the stage. At first he wrote also, in his own words, "in the spirit of the romantic past." This period may be said to have lasted down to 1864, when he produced the "Rival Princes."\* The "Rival Princes," written in 1864, is founded on an episode in Norwegian history of the thirteenth century. Sverre, an adventurer not of the royal blood, had fought his way to the crown and reigned from 1184 to 1202. At his death a long struggle for the succession began, the chief aspirants being Hakon and Skule. In the opening scene the former is chosen king by the ordeal of fire. He reigns in friendship with his rival, whose daughter he marries. But Skule is restless while Hakon reigns. He feels himself as good a man as the king, and yet he lacks the kingly strength and the confidence which the ordeal by fire has given Hakon. Of the two conflicting impulses, his reverence for the God-elected and his own burning ambition, his ambition finally wins. He rebels and makes himself king, but reigns only a very short time, overborne by his stronger rival. The last scene is extremely dramatic. Skule with his son are besieged in a church, surrounded by the populace in arms against them. The king is rapidly drawing near. There is no escape. Skule has long felt his doom approaching, and now in a short prayer he offers his life to God as an atonement for his sins, and walks out to death with his son Peter. The doors close behind them and reopen only to admit Hakon over Skule's body.

The "Rival Princes" is not really an historic drama at all. The characters are historic, but their treatment is entirely modern. Skule is a modern man habited as a viking. As Brandes has observed, "The psychological interest completely routs the historic."

Towards the end of the year 1863 Ibsen's friends succeeded in obtaining for him a pension of twenty-seven hundred marks. He at once left Norway and travelled to Rome, where he settled, and proceeded in solitude to write the principal works of his second period. These are lyric dramas in rhyming verses. Properly speaking the "Comedy of Love" belongs

\* Ibsen's title is "Kongs-Emnerne," which may be rendered "Kings-Stuff."

to this period, although it was produced in 1862. The two masterpieces of this time are "Brand," written in 1866, and "Peer Gynt," written in 1867.

In the first of these Ibsen incarnated his own fiery zeal for right, and discontent with half-measures, in the character of a Norwegian priest. Brand is a man of heroic mould, knowing only duty, and married to a wife of fine temper and resolution. His lot is cast in a cure deep in a Norwegian valley. The villagers are dull, selfish clods, narrow and undiscerning, and they as little prize Brand's presence among them as such society might be expected to do. However, his lot being cast among them, he must stop there and do his duty, which he accordingly does, at no less expense than the life of his wife and child, killed by the unwholesome air. His considerable fortune he devotes to building a church, and only when he has given up for the sake of his cure and his duty all that makes life worth living to him does he turn on his ungrateful congregation and denounce them from the church steps for their sloth and indifference. He then flees to the mountains, and dies there.

Brand is a man astray in this age. The Roman communion could perhaps still find him work, and in the great age of the Church he would have been a shining light; but a more tragic pouring of new wine into old bottles was never painted than when Ibsen created this fiery, zealous priest and chained him in a Norwegian mountain parish in the Protestant communion. Some misconception has arisen about the leading character in this play. In making him a priest Ibsen did not intend any criticism on any form of religious belief. In his own words, "It would have been just as possible for me to apply the same syllogism to a sculptor or to a politician."

"Peer Gynt" is the Norwegian "Faust." It has been called "a convulsive flight of fancy." Peer Gynt is the incarnation of the ignoble, just as Brand is of the heroic, of our days. He is an elaborate satire on the Norwegian society of to-day and one of Ibsen's most popular characters in his own country. He is first introduced as a wild lad, who is not very good-tempered and plays practical jokes. For one of the latter he has to flee his native village and live in the mountains. He has all sorts of supernatural adventures, each one of which is made the subject of a fresh satire, and finally escapes to America. There he makes a large for-

tune in trade, chiefly in Bibles, rum, slaves, and gods. The fourth act discovers him in middle life prosperous and thoroughly repulsive. He loses his first fortune, has wonderful experiences in Africa, where he is hailed as a prophet, makes another fortune in California, returns to Norway, but loses his fortune in a shipwreck, and lands only to die in the arms of an old woman who loved him when they were boy and girl together and has loved him faithfully to the end.

In 1869 he produced the "League of Youth," and then he entered on a period of eight years during which he wrote only one drama. This is an unusually long interval between two of his productions, and it occurs at a very important point in his life. After his Roman period he travelled. He was present at the opening of the Suez Canal, and then for some years settled at Dresden. When at Rome he had been struck—like Schiller seventy years before—with the figure of Julian the Apostate, and had made many historic and archæological studies with the view of dramatizing his life. The result was the appearance in 1873 of his play "Emperor and Galilean."

This is the only play in which Ibsen has dramatized a period of history not that of his own country. The play is of Shakespearean size in two parts of five acts each, with thirty-three characters in the first part and forty-five in the second. It stretches over a period of thirteen years—from 351 A.D., when Julian's brother Gallus was named Cæsar, to 364 A.D., when Julian, as emperor, was killed in the invasion of Persia. The first act is laid at Constantinople and introduces Julian as a youth of nineteen, a Christian, but little edified with Christian conduct. He has no more ambition than to keep his head on his shoulders and pass his time in religious speculation; and when Gallus, his brother, is named Cæsar, he is grateful for leave to travel and make the acquaintance of heathen philosophers. The subsequent acts take us to Athens, where Julian has already become half a pagan, and to Ephesus, where he is secretly initiated and first hears the voice of fate marking him out as the destined reformer of the world—the creator and governor of the third kingdom—for, as he says, the old beauty (of the pagan faith) is no longer beautiful, and the new truth (of the Christian faith) is no longer true. The profligates whose orgies disgraced the lives of pagans were not more disgusting to the severe Julian than the rancorous

quarrels that occupied the attention of the rival Christian sects. At Ephesus, with this conviction of his destiny fresh upon him, comes the news of Gallus's death and his own nomination as Cæsar and the successor of Constantius, the reigning emperor. The last two acts are passed in Gaul, where the troops salute their victorious Cæsar as Augustus. Julian at least makes up his mind to face the emperor in open revolt rather than allow his fealty to lead him to the death that treacherous relative was preparing for him.

The second part opens at Constantinople. Constantius is dead; Julian is emperor, and his first public act is to sacrifice to the gods, thus ending the ten years of dissimulation which had lasted since his secret initiation at Ephesus.

The second and third acts are laid in Antioch, and are chiefly taken up with two incidents. The first is Julian's sacrifice to Apollo, whose figure and temple crumble away before the curse of the Bishop of Chalcedon; the second is the provision of the single goose as a sacrifice at the temple of Cybele, by the last priest left of all the college, and who brought the goose—his all—for the goddess's service. The fourth and fifth acts are occupied with the Persian campaign and the death of Julian.

It must be confessed that the "Emperor and Galilean" is hard reading. It has its points of interest, the principal being that Ibsen wrote it, but it is fatiguing work. Ibsen has not the gift of fine writing. It is never his rhetoric that moves us; it is his subject and his characters. But here again his canvas is too big for him, and his characters do not live. He cannot seize and present to his readers one or two salient points, and his patient method fails when it has to make the portraits of so many people who lived so long ago, besides analyzing their motives and impulses.

Ibsen attacked his enormous subject with fine courage, but the time and the subject are more than even his admirable manner and immense labors can conquer. His analysis of the *dramatis personæ* had by now grown so elaborate that it was unsuited to such crowded plays. Whether Ibsen was conscious of this or not, the "Emperor and Galilean" is his last historical effort, and his subsequent plays contain about six characters mostly, while the action takes place within forty-eight hours.

The "Emperor and Galilean" is, in spite of all drawbacks, a fine piece of

work; but it has been quite overshadowed by the series of "family dramas," as Ibsen calls them. These number seven altogether and have been produced in the last twelve years; the latest appeared this year. The first was called "The Pillars of Society," and was published in 1877. The scene of the play is a small Norwegian coast town. The chief pillar of society is Consul Bernick, who, with his wife and child, his decorous life, his well-earned and well-spent wealth, presents a pleasing illustration of the virtues of the social system. The Bernicks have two clouds on the horizon of their content. One is Mrs. Bernick's brother John. He had been discovered in a strolling actress's apartments thirteen years before, and had fled to the States to avoid scandal, taking with him the contents of Bernick's till. The other is Mrs. Bernick's half-sister, Lona Tresselt. She had once been engaged to Bernick, but when it transpired that her rich aunt had disinherited her in her younger sister's favor, Bernick threw her over. He excused himself on the ground of an overmastering passion, but the passion was really *pour les beaux yeux de la cassette*. When the discarded Lona met him with his betrothed, she so far forgot herself as to box his ears, a scandal the town did not forget. When the play opens she is supposed to be still in the States with Johann. The course of the story shows that far from Johann being the *mauvais sujet* he was represented, it was in reality Bernick himself who had been with the actress, and Johann, then an idle, careless lad, allowed himself to be suspected in order to shield Bernick, who was courting his sister. As soon as he was well clear of the town Bernick allowed the report to get about that Johann had robbed the till, whereas in reality the till had not been robbed at all. The report (Bernick thought) could not do much harm to Johann's already damaged reputation, and might induce his customers to give him breathing-time, for when he took over the business the affairs of the house were much embarrassed. All this and much more is brought to light by the sudden arrival of the brother and sister from the States. The play goes on to show the pillar of society as a man quite ready to send an unseaworthy ship to sea in the way of business, and even not too horrified at the thought that his brother-in-law might go down in it, for Johann, burning with wrath at his brother's hypocrisy, was starting for the States with the intention to return after settling his affairs and de-

nounce Bernick to the whole town. The last act opens on a stormy evening. The unseaworthy ship starts, and the unhappy consul learns when too late that not only his enemy but his only son Olaf, the pride of his life and a brave, adventurous lad, is on board. By a strange coincidence, that very evening has been chosen to give the consul a public address and a torchlight procession in his honor as the chief pillar of the town's society. Just before the speeches he receives the news that the ship has not sailed after all, as the shipwright took on himself to stop it. In the relief and joy of this discovery he resolves to make a clean breast of everything, and his fellow-citizens who arrive to honor him deliver their addresses to a man who denounces himself as all but a criminal, and abjures the title of pillar of society, declaring that the only true pillars of society are the spirits of truth and freedom.

"The Pillars of Society" was followed by the two plays which earned for Ibsen a reputation outside Germany and his own country. They appeared within two years of each other; and they have roused endless controversy and will probably continue to do so, but about their merits as pieces of workmanship there can be no two opinions. The first of these was christened by Ibsen "A Doll's House," and has been translated into German and English by the less fantastic title of "Nora." This and the drama which followed — "Ghosts" — may be said to have gained the attention of Europe.

The attention has been sometimes admiring, sometimes scoffing, often puzzled and angry, but the dramas he has written in the last twelve years have never failed, as they became known, to excite strong and growing interest. His own bias in writing them is not disguised. It is often clear merely from the title — "The Pillars of Society," "A Doll's House," and so forth, which have a satirical ring. But, divided though opinion may be on many points concerning them, it cannot be questioned that they are finished works of art, and, however perilously near one play goes to subjects not usually treated dramatically, one cannot be too grateful, at this end of the century, for a writer for whom the study of animalism pure and simple has such a reassuringly small interest.

The action is stripped bare of all adventitious aids. The people are of the class where any one may be found — not too rich, and not too poor, not lowly nor

highly born, fairly cultivated, not bores — in short in every respect the ordinary type of person. The action is then unfolded in Ibsen's customary delicate way; and to abstract such a composition is very hard. When the abstract is completed it tells little more of the play than might be learned from a description of a drawing that said it was executed on a piece of paper twelve inches by eight — a description which might be unimpeachably true so far as it went.

The plot of "A Doll's House" is somewhat as follows: Mrs. Helmer (Nora) is a lady about twenty-five years old, married to a hard-working, conscientious man of business. They have three children and one intimate friend, a Dr. Rank. The play opens on Christmas eve. Helmer has just been made manager of the bank, and for the first time in their lives the young couple have some spare cash. Helmer is deep in office work, among which is the reorganizing of the *personnel* of the bank; and while Mrs. Helmer is arranging their Christmas festivities, an old friend of hers, Mrs. Linden, comes to see her.

Married for money, to save her mother from poverty, Mrs. Linden finds herself, early in life, a widow, childless, with her fortune gone, and compelled to earn her livelihood. She comes to Mrs. Helmer just at the right moment, for Helmer has resolved to create at any rate one vacancy, and he promises it to his wife's friend. The man he dismisses is one Krogstad, who was under a cloud some years before, but had been taken on again, and had proved himself a capable clerk, and determined to lead a steady life. The reasons which prompt his dismissal are not, it must be confessed, of the most business-like nature. The fastidious Helmer was an old schoolfellow of Krogstad, and does not like to be called by his christian name before the clerks, especially by Krogstad. Moreover he knows of Krogstad's early fault, and with the conscious rectitude of a man who has never been found out, he will not have his immaculate bank stained with the presence of such a man. So Krogstad is dismissed, and Mrs. Linden gets his place. Krogstad, however, is not to be got rid of so easily; he presents himself to Mrs. Helmer, and reminds her that some years before, when her husband was very ill, and her father dying, she came to him and asked for 300*l.* He advanced it, requiring only her father's name as a security. Mrs. Helmer, knowing that to trouble either husband or father

would be to kill him, obtained her father's signature by the simple process of writing it herself, and is struck dumb when Krogstad points out to her that this is forgery, and that it was no worse a deed than hers which ruined his whole life. He is quite unable to make her see anything but her motives, which were certainly excellent, but leaves her with the assurance that if he is driven out of society a second time she shall suffer the same lot. The first act ends with a lecture of Helmer's on the enormity of Krogstad's crime, and the subterfuges by which he sought to conceal it, in every word of which Mrs. Helmer hears herself condemned.

Mrs. Helmer has been brought up all her life, first by her father and then by her husband, to be their plaything, and is incapable of being much else. But her quick, sensitive nature responds with terrible readiness to Helmer's denunciations of the fault of untruth, and how it poisons all home life. So the second act shows her shaken to her very soul, and already telling her nurse that the children must not see so much of her as hitherto. She is preparing a fancy dress for a ball which she is to attend as a Capri fisher-girl, dancing the tarantella, when Helmer appears, and she again begins to ask him to keep Krogstad and dismiss some other clerk to make room for Mrs. Linden. Pressed, he gives his reasons, which his wife laughs at as petty. This nettles him, and he sends off Krogstad's dismissal at once. Krogstad comes in and tells Mrs. Helmer that so far as he is concerned the matter shall be a secret between himself and the Helmers, but that her husband must certainly know of the forged cheque, and through it he (Krogstad) shall rise in the world, and be virtually the director of the bank. Mrs. Helmer laughs at the idea of her husband coming to terms with such a wretch, and the scene closes with Krogstad dropping his denunciation into Helmer's letter-box. Her friend, Mrs. Linden, finds her in a state of distraction, from which she learns the whole situation. She, who was formerly engaged to Krogstad, goes away intending to use all her influence with him to make him take back the letter, only in the mean time, of course, Helmer must not go near the letter-box. He enters, and, to keep him from going to read his letters, Mrs. Helmer, while still in an agony of apprehension, dances the tarantella like a mad creature. This is a powerful scene out of many such. While Dr. Rank is quietly playing at the piano Helmer sits on the sofa, calm and

serene, nodding and directing his wife's movements as, with the dreadful secret in her bosom, she dances round and round the room.

The last act is at midnight. The letter remains in the box. Mrs. Linden and Krogstad have met as old lovers, and have agreed to share each other's lot, but Mrs. Linden will be no party to any further deception as between husband and wife; so the letter lies locked behind the wire, and the key is in Helmer's pocket. The ball is over, the Helmers descend to their own flat, the house is still, and Helmer, fired by his good fortune, his wife's beauty, and his friend's champagne, is in spirits much too high for Nora, who feels the storm very near now.

She welcomes an interruption in the shape of Dr. Rank, who looks in on his way home, and as he bids them good-night, Helmer takes his letters out of the box, and finds two of Rank's cards marked with a black cross. This is his preconcerted way of announcing his coming death from a malady which has long threatened him. The shock sobers Helmer, who retires to his study to read his letters, and leaves his wife in the sitting-room. Before leaving her he says, "Nora, I often wish some danger might threaten you against which I could stake body and soul, and all, all else for your dear sake." This is the echo of her own feelings. She by now fully realizes her crime, but all the more does she look to her husband — whom she loves and reverences as a demigod — to take all on his shoulders and save her from ruin. While she fully expects him to do so, and does not for a moment dream that he will yield to Krogstad in one single point, she has learned too much in the last few hours, and, to avoid accepting so great a sacrifice, rushes out to drown herself — when Helmer appears. In two minutes he destroys the ideal that Nora had made of him. He tells her furiously that she has ruined him, that he must now submit to all Krogstad's demands, that, of course, he shall take the children away from her, that he might have expected such conduct from her father's daughter — in short, he reveals himself as caring only for himself, as utterly careless of her trouble, and pours out infinite vials of wrath and scorn on her stupidity and wickedness. They can live together as before, and will do so, of course, to save appearances, but she has forfeited his love forever. In the midst of the storm Krogstad sends a letter with the forged cheque, which he gives up for



Helmer to destroy. Helmer's first cry is, "I am saved," and, having added that he forgives his wife, with some edifying comments such as that a man always feels happy when he has forgiven his wife and so forth, he supposes that they will now go on as before. But his wife does not see matters in that light at all. In one instant of life, a lightning flash has revealed to her herself, her situation, and her husband all in their true light, and all utterly different from what she expected. She thought she was her husband's wife, and she finds she is only his toy. She finds herself absolutely alone in the world, with nobody to guide her except a man who despises her from the bottom of his heart. The situation is unbearable, and she goes away from him to learn, as she says, to know herself before presuming to teach her children. Will she return?

Such is in brief "A Doll's House." But the thousand little points, the sweetmeats Mrs. Helmer eats on the sly, the stories she tells, the pet names Helmer showers on her, his rejoicing over "her woman's weakness," his vanity (the irritating complacency with which he laughs at his own little jokes), the whole episode of Dr. Rank's story, cannot be told in an abstract.

"Ghosts" is another riddle, but it is not so easy to speak of as "A Doll's House." It is shorter, much shorter than "A Doll's House," but it is quite as long as we can bear. Mrs. Alving, a lady of position and property, residing on her own estate in Norway, is introduced on the day when she is expecting her only boy Oswald to return from Paris, where he has overworked himself as an artist. She had money of her own and a large fortune from her husband. The latter she has devoted to building a "home" to his memory. All her life has been passed in building up also a reputation for his son to revere, just as her married life was passed in concealing the debauchery and drunkenness which made her life with him a martyrdom. Oswald tipsles — there is no doubt of it; and when Mrs. Alving hears him trying to kiss Regina (her maid) in the dining-room, the key-note of the whole play is given by her ejaculation of "Ghosts!" by which Mrs. Alving means that we are all the ghosts of our fathers' deeds. After a time Oswald confides to her that it is not overwork that is wrong with him, it is a taint in his blood, which has already once in Paris driven him mad. He now carries always with him a box of morphia powders, with which he wants to

be put out of the way when his malady recurs. In coming home he has been struck with the beauty of Regina. She seems so full of strength, and the promise of enjoyment of life, that he is sure she would take him out of his wretched self, while, if the worst came to the worst, he could rely on her to put him out of his misery. His mother is obliged to tell him that Regina is his half-sister, and under the strain of this announcement, and the excitement of the burning down of the Alving Home, his mind gives way. The curtain falls at sunrise after the terrible night, and leaves the unhappy mother with her son going mad before her eyes, while, with the morphia powder in her hand, she recoils from the horror of being his murderess.

"Ghosts" is a rift into hell, and into a hell more awful than Dante's or Milton's. The physical torture of Judas, the mental agony of Satan are all far off; our possible share in them is in the future. But Ibsen begins with us on safe and every-day ground, and then almost unobserved he draws aside a bolt here and a bar there, till with a hideous tumult our platform gives way, and we find ourselves in the roar of infernal tempests and surrounded by the ghosts of our own misdeeds. This is a hell to terrify indeed, one built up round us day by day for ourselves and our offspring with our own hands. The intimate connection which Ibsen points out here with the worst fates that can befall mankind, and our own daily actions, makes "Ghosts" terrible reading, and the burden of life almost too heavy to be borne. It may be questioned whether such a play ought to be written. It certainly would be intolerable if written by one who took the monkey-like delight in the weaknesses of human nature which some writers have shown. But the deep, almost religious, tone of the writing gives the play a right to stand its trial at least, and for those whose nerves are strong enough to let them look into its abysses it may offer potent morals.

"Ghosts" was followed in the next year by "An Enemy of Society." In a small town in Norway there is a bath establishment presided over by a Doctor Stockmann, a genial, honest man, delighted to be in the small bustle of a small town after years of burial in a village practice. He is adored by his wife and children, is hot-tempered, warm-hearted, and impulsive. He is one of the very few of Ibsen's characters that one can imagine seeing on the stage with any comfort. He likes beef and whiskey toddy, has inex-

haustible spirits, and is popular with every one except his brother, the burgomaster. The latter—a cold, calculating man, with a digestion his brother is always laughing at, and an intense pride in his office and importance—mistrusts the doctor. His mistrust is thoroughly well grounded; for, on the latter discovering that the water which supplies the bath is poisonous, he proposes to say so publicly and at once, and to set about remedying the drains, which the burgomaster's obstinacy has had laid in the wrong place. He is heartily supported by his townsmen so long as they are under the impression that the shareholders in the baths will have to pay; but when they find that the money must be raised by a local tax on themselves, they all turn against him. Determined that the truth shall be known, he summons a general meeting. They forbid him to talk about the baths, but allow him to make some general remarks—which are trenchant. He "detests leading men," "the most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom are the compact majority." "What sort of truth does a majority take up?" "Truths that are so decrepit that they are in a fair way to become lies." At the same time he says in reply to a question, "What are some of these old truths that have become lies?" "Ah! I couldn't go over the whole heap of abominations, but to begin with I'll just keep to one acknowledged truth, which at bottom is a hideous lie . . . and that is the doctrine that the multitude, the vulgar herd, the masses, are the pith of the people, that indeed they are the people; that the common man, that the ignorant, undeveloped member of society has the same right to condemn or to sanction, to govern or to rule, as the few people of intellectual power. The sort of people I am speaking of you don't find only in the lower classes; they crawl and swarm all around us—up to the very highest classes of society. Why, only look at your own smug and smart burgomaster." And so forth. He ends by saying that he would "much rather see his dear native town ruined than see it flourishing on a lie."

Of course such a wretch must not be tolerated. He is voted an "enemy of society," boycotted, and ruined; but he does not care in the least, and the drama closes with his resolution to stay on in the town, and teach the ragamuffins, and see if there is any good stuff in them.

"An Enemy of Society" embodies Ibsen's recorded opinions in a curiously literal manner. The play appeared in

1882, and on the 3rd of January of that year he wrote to a friend:—

Björnson says the majority is always right, and for a practical politician that is the proper thing to say. I, on the contrary, must necessarily say, "The minority is always right." Of course I do not refer to that minority of people who are in a state of stagnation, and who are left in the lurch by the great intermediate party, with us called Liberals; but I mean that minority which is the advanced guard in the forward march towards a goal the majority is not yet in a condition to attain.

Perhaps a letter from Ibsen to George Brandes, written so long ago as 1871, and before "An Enemy of Society" was dreamed of, may be with advantage quoted here.

The state is the curse of the individual. How was the municipal strength of Prussia purchased? By the absorption of the individual into the political and geographical idea. The bar-keeper makes the best soldier. The opposite case may be exemplified by the Jews, the nobility of the human race. How have they maintained their individuality in isolation, in poetry, notwithstanding all the brutality of the outside world? Through the fact that they have had no municipal burdens on their shoulders. Had they remained in Palestine, they would have gone to ruin in their construction long ago, as all other peoples have done. The state must be abolished. In a revolution that would bring about so desirable a consummation, I should gladly take part. Undermine the idea of the commonwealth, set up spontaneity and spiritual kinship as the sole determining points in a union, and there will be attained the beginning of a freedom that is of some value. Changes in the form of government are nothing else than different degrees of trifling—a little more, or a little less—absurd folly. The state has its root in time; it will attain its summit in time. Greater things than it will fall. All existing forms of religion will pass away. Neither moral conceptions nor art forms have an eternity before them. To how much, after all, is it our duty to hold fast? Who will vouch for me that two and two do not make five on Jupiter?

(Ibsen to Brandes, Feb. 17, 1871.)

What is really needed is a revolt in the human spirit.

(Ibsen to Brandes, Dec. 20, 1870.)

"The Wild Duck" (1884) is a sort of companion piece to "An Enemy of Society," and the two together form a foil to "Nora" and "The Pillars of Society." The two former plays contain the portraits of men who try to set right the false situations described in the two latter. "Nora" is a crusade for a "true marriage;" "The Wild Duck" is the story of a man who tried to make his friend live such a

marriage. "The Pillars of Society" shows an unsound condition of commercial morality; and "An Enemy of Society" is the man who seeks to remedy that condition.

In Dr. Stockmann Ibsen has drawn the portrait of a man of abundant health and strength, full of the enjoyment of life, endowed with splendid energy and endless capacity for work, and he is made to fail because he is unshaken in his devotion to the truth. The man himself is invincible; but the idea, powerless against the world arrayed against it, recoils on the man and ruins him. In Gregers Werle — the principal character of "The Wild Duck" — there is nothing to admire except a certain insane disinterestedness. He is an impressionable, inexperienced young man, not over-manly, who prides himself on his common sense. His personality is of the least impressive kind, but in the strength of his exaltation he commits acts of the most insufferable tactlessness and cruelty. The plot is, in brief, as follows. Gregers returns home after an absence of fifteen years and finds his old friend Ekdal married to a cast-off favorite of his father's. Their home is, in spite of small means and the skeleton in the closet, a happy and contented one. Ekdal is perfectly ignorant; his wife is discreet, and entirely devoted to him and their daughter of fourteen. Gregers determines to let in the light, to make them live "a true marriage," as he says, in distressing parody of Nora's utterances. He does so with results that might have been foreseen — the ruin of his friend's happiness, and the death by her own hand of their little daughter. With helpless fatuity he remarks, when all the mischief is done, "I hope you will allow, Mrs. Ekdal, that I acted for the best." "Oh, yes, I dare say you did," says the poor woman. "All I can say is, God forgive you for what you've done!" Truly a most pestilent fellow! The moral of the play is drawn by Dr. Relling, the common-sense character of the piece, who openly sneers at Werle from first to last. After the catastrophe, when the latter observes that Ekdal and his wife must have travelled a long way from the "ideals of their youth," he remarks: "Before I forget it, with your kind permission I will ask you not to use that outlandish word. We have a very good Norwegian word that means just the same thing, — lie. Life would be unbearable if it were not for its lies."

Dr. Relling is a comfortable, robust character — in every way the peer of Dr.

Stockmann, only with more knowledge of the world. He diagnoses Gregers in the following summary way: "You are suffering from a complicated case. First you have this gouty fever for getting things right; and then, which is worse, you go about as if bewitched, in a sort of worshipping craze; you must always have something outside your own concerns to gape at."

"Rosmersholm" was written three years ago. The play takes its name from an estate in Norway owned by Rosmer, a widowed clergyman living there with a housekeeper and one Rebecca West, who nursed Rosmer's wife during the days of mental aberration that preceded her death by suicide in the mill-stream. The parson's political opinions, once of the most orthodox, are — when the play opens — rapidly becoming radical. He is drawn as a good man. His life is decorous, his ambitions dignified. He seeks to ennoble those he meets, and this object, often set forth to Rebecca West, has inspired her with the warmest admiration and enthusiasm for him. Tragic though the ending to his first marriage had been, it was, in some respects, a fortunate thing for him that his wife died. They were not happy together, and there were not wanting tongues to accuse Rebecca of seeking to supply the dead wife's place, and of carelessness as to her position and reputation in the mean time. She was in this respect guiltless and always had been, but she had, in point of fact, allowed Mrs. Rosmer to suspect her, and had played upon her feelings not without the hope that her evidently suicidal bent might deepen into action. All this with the loftiest ideas — the notion, namely, that she might be to Rosmer what his wife could never be — a sharer in his great ideals. She succeeds; and Rosmer offers her his hand. But the year and more that she has spent in his society have so far ennobled her views that she feels unworthy of the prize she has striven for so earnestly, and she declines it. How Rosmer is brought to see the fine possibilities of Rebecca's nature, and to realize that there at last, but separated forever from him by a gulf of criminal intent, is the true and only partner for him; how all desire for life and work is shrivelled up in him, and how the two, in the end, commit suicide together, can only be rightly told in Ibsen's words. The majestic gloom that arrests our attention even for the horror of "Ghosts" broods over "Rosmersholm" from first to last. It is this power of atmospheric

effect, of projecting over the whole drama the shadow of an awful, an inevitable fate, that makes Ibsen's plays what they are. In this solemn half-light he can develop plots that no other writer would dare to handle—or at any rate that no other writer could handle—without evoking their condemnation as violent or absurd.

"The Lady of the Sea" appeared about two months ago. It is remarkable as being the only play of Ibsen's where a human will at war with unfriendly fates wins the fight. It ends happily after a long and anxious development. Before she was married, Mrs. Wangel—the lady of the sea—was engaged to a sailor, who one day told her that he had murdered his captain in the preceding night. He must flee for his life and travel far and long, but in the end he would come back and fetch her. He took a ring from her finger, and one from his own, and, fastening both to his key-ring, he flung the whole into the sea in token that they were both now married to each other and to the ocean. The trick sounds little enough told so—it seems only the commonplace staginess of a rascal. But the man was something more than a rascal. He was a man of pertinacity and courage. The girl was impressionable, and her former lover had gained a real ascendancy over her. Thus when she had been three years married and found herself still thinking of the stranger she began to feel her disloyalty keenly. Their only child had died, and she was driven to tell her husband the whole story. He is, fortunately, a doctor and a wise man. He recognizes that some of the disorder of her mind is to be physically explained, more may be accounted for by one of those mysterious affinities for the sea sometimes shown by sensitive natures, and the residuum representing any fraction of his wife's affection that is really not his, is exceedingly small. Forewarned, forearmed. The stranger appears and summons Mrs. Wangel to leave her husband's side and follow him. A sufficiently painful scene ensues; but the doctor is skilful and firm, he rides with a light hand, and the stranger is routed.

"The Lady of the Sea" seems to be Ibsen's answer to the charge, freely levelled at him, of pessimism. His genius had certainly led him to presiding for the most part over gloomy and hopeless tangles, and he has confessed himself to be a pessimist as regards humanity in most of the shapes it is likely to assume. At the same time, however, he is an optimist as

to its future. Witness the admirable vigor with which he clothes Dr. Stockmann, and the teachableness displayed even by the insufferable Helmer. He has the most profound and cordial admiration for all strong individualities. To take perhaps the most conspicuous figure of our time, Prince Bismarck, he reveres the mighty ruler and only regrets that he does not understand the longing of his age for beauty.

Such in faint outline is Henrik Ibsen, one who is not to be laughed down nor damned with faint praise, still less cowed into silence. He says his word and strikes his blow for righteousness, as he conceives it, and cares neither who hears nor who forbears, neither who is smitten nor who is spared. He is already a power in the world to-day, and it is hard to see that his influence has much more than dawned.

WALTER FREWEN LORD.

From Temple Bar.

#### A PROPOS OF SAMUEL ROGERS.

THE poets who delighted our fathers in the earlier years of this century are fast passing into history. Their memoirs have been written—that second funeral service which the reputation of all men of letters has to endure—and their works have been collected and annotated. The verdict of public opinion, passed in their heyday, is confirmed or reversed at their death. No man is afraid of the dead lion. There is no Kicklebury preface\* to be dreaded by the critic who passes his sentence on the works of the departed.

Possibly, no English poet has ever stood so considerably out of his rank as a poet as Samuel Rogers did in his heyday of fame. Placed above Wordsworth and Coleridge, looked up to by Byron as the chief of the great choir which makes the first half of this century famous, and received at Holland House as almost the arbiter of other men's claims to literary distinction, Samuel Rogers occupied for upwards of half a century a quite unique position. "No man ever seemed so important who did so little," says Mrs. Norton.

There was a danger that a man so considered in his lifetime should, by the inevitable law of reaction, be undervalued

\* Mr. Thackeray had brilliantly vindicated himself in a preface to the "Kickleburys on the Rhine" against some rather turgid criticism of Samuel Phillips, an able reviewer in the *Times* some quarter of a century or more ago.

after it; and it is just possible that the verdict of the present day, which places him not only below those giants named above, but below Shelley, Keats, Crabbe, Southey, and Moore, may be set aside in part at some later period. It is possible but unlikely, for the claims of Rogers as a poet do not rest upon the originality of his muse, so much as on the polish of his verse, on his fine taste, his cultivated mind, and, lastly, upon the splendid manner in which his poems were offered to the reader. Yet, if his works were as much lost as the lost books of Livy, it cannot be said that English literature would materially suffer. Better to lose everything Rogers has written than to lose Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty," with its magnificent verse beginning, "Stern lawgiver," etc. Better to lose most that Rogers has written than Byron's "There is a silence in the pathless wood;" or than Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel;" or than much of Shelley's poetry. Nevertheless, the world would be sorry to lose his poems, and the lines selected by the late Mr. Hayward as proofs of his skill, and as lines frequently quoted, will, we think, give sufficient reason for this regret:—

But can the wiles of art, the grasp of power,  
Snatch the rich relics of a well-spent hour?

Or again:—

As the stern grandeur of a Gothic tower  
Awes us less deeply in its morning hour,  
Than when the shades of Time serenely fall  
On every broken arch and ivied wall.

In neither of these quotations is there genius or originality, but the thoughts are beautifully expressed with great refinement of taste and with rare polish, and show that "exquisite sensibility to excellence" with which Mr. Hayward justly credits him.

The character of Rogers was a rather complex one. Mrs. Norton wittily and truly said that his god was harmony, and many various and some opposite qualities went to the completion of the Rogers that we now know. He was dreaded and admired by many, and possibly loved by a few; he was frequently bitter and almost cruel of speech, but was noble in many of his acts. Most of these good acts were done without the possibility of a return of any sort to him. Some, such as the efforts he made for Cary, the translator of Dante, were done for men who were opposed to him in feeling and who believed him their enemy. His munificence to Moore and Campbell is well

known, because these men were not ashamed to declare it; but the very delicacy with which he performed his part of donor, we may be sure, conceals from us many similar acts. "He not only gave freely and generously, but looked out for occasions of being kind," wrote some lady who knew him well to Mr. Hayward.

The sneer of Rogers, as well known in its day as the bitter jest of Jerrold in his day, is rather hard to defend, but we are not quite hopeless of doing so. Bred in luxury, gifted with a fine intellect, defended on all sides from all which could make life precarious, successful in his ambition as poet, as host, as arbiter at Holland House, one would imagine that here was a man to whom fortune had been so genial he could afford to reflect her smile. But he sneered. Not that he could not be very reasonable and very kind, but the way of the man was to question, to doubt, even to sneer. Was it that his fine taste was cultivated to such a point that nothing pleased him absolutely? No doubt partly so. Perhaps some friend was to be protected against a careless gibe or an ill-natured remark. Perhaps his critical delicacy was offended by some unfair pretensions, when he saw brilliancy playing over the surface of ignorance. When Fenimore Cooper spoke to him of a work of Washington Irving's, of which he hoped or expected to hear Rogers speak in praise, all Rogers said was, in his dry, caustic way, "It is a long book." "And that," said Cooper, "is a short criticism." It was, however, a great deal more than that. It expressed pithily that the book was not good enough for its length. It was Rogers's sneer, but it was true, and, in the majority of cases, we fancy that Rogers condensed into these pithy utterances unpleasant truths, which it is well some one told, and which most of us shirk telling.

Rogers's personal appearance at once challenged attention. Carlyle tells us of his pale head, white, bare, and cold as snow, of his large blue eyes, cruel, sorrowful, and of his sardonic shelf chin. When such a one added a look of scorn and emitted a bitter jest, Diogenes seems revived for our contemplation. He appears to us at a distance as a passionless man, with an unpleasing superiority of a certain sort over more impulsive natures. Not a man that excites the slightest approach to hero-worship or a desire to imitate him. "His God was harmony, sitting on a lukewarm cloud," said witty Mrs. Norton. "I never could *lash myself* into



a feeling of affection or admiration for him," says Lady Dufferin in a letter to Mr. Hayward, and then she continues : —

To tell the truth, there was a certain *unreality* in him which repelled me. I have heard him say many graceful things, but few kind ones, and he never seemed to me thoroughly in earnest save in expressing contempt or dislike.

Mrs. Norton considered that his tastes preponderated over his passions. She adds, he "defrayed the expenses of his tastes as other men make outlay for the gratification of their passions ;" and continues : —

All within limit of reason, he did not squander more than won the affection of his Seraglio, the Nine Muses, nor bet upon Pegasus . . . he did nothing rash. I am sure Rogers, as a baby, never fell down *unless he was pushed*.

Rogers possessed abundance of cold wit of the head, but no humor of head and heart. He was not apparently a man who demanded or gave sympathy. He was essentially a man of society and of the world. It is said that to hear the praise of a rival poet pained him. If this be true he could not belong to the first order of men. "I remember," says Lady Dufferin, "his treating me with a rudeness almost bearish because I indiscreetly avowed how much I admired Tennyson's 'Princess.'" This sort of envy suffices to dwarf the man. How different from Thackeray's generous appreciation of Dickens, where we have the large heart which gave us humor as well as wit, the noble nature, so rich that it had no jealousy, but warm appreciation of the genius of others !

Though Rogers could show this jealousy, he was keenly alive to the same deficiency in others, as when Lamartine breakfasted with him, and Rogers inquired after the characteristics of Béranger. "Je ne le connais pas," said Lamartine. "I pity you," replied Rogers.

Rogers's house in St. James's Place was a model of elegance. A chaste, refined taste prevailed in it, that same taste which caused him to polish and refine his verse to the highest point, and that judgment which enabled him to discern genuine faculty wherever he met it, and which made his own conversation delightful to such different men as Fox and Lord Byron, Horne Tooke and Wordsworth, Thirlwall and Sydney Smith.

Ticknor, in his journal for July 5, 1835, says : —

The house [Mr. Rogers's] opens on the park near the old Mall, which was the fashionable walk in Pope's time, and the place from which the beaux were to see the lock of Belinda's hair, when it should be changed into a constellation ; his garden gate opening immediately upon the green grass, and his library and dining-room windows commanding a prospect of the whole of the park, and of the gay life that is still seen there. Everything within the house is beautiful, and in as good taste as the prospect abroad. . . . Mr. Rogers's conversation was in keeping with his establishment, full of the past — anecdotes, facts, recollections in abundance. . . . All he says is marked by the good taste he shows in his works, and the perfected good sense which he has been almost a century in acquiring.

His breakfasts and dinners became famous. He had the pick of the ablest men of the day, and had for upwards of half a century been accustomed to receive the choicest society. He knew whom to place together, and he talked well himself and let others talk. Probably in no house in London, Holland House excepted, was there such good talk as at Rogers's breakfasts. These are said to have been preliminary tests for his dinners, yet the breakfasts seem not to have been in as good repute as the dinners ; Sir Walter Scott at one of the dinners in which were assembled Wordsworth, Scott, Lord John Russell, and Jekyll, writes : "The conversation flagged as usual, and jokes were fired like minute guns, producing an effect not much less melancholy ;" and Mr. Hayward says that Rogers's want of animal spirits prevented his keeping the ball rolling, and that the "conversations at his dinners not unfrequently flagged."

These famous breakfasts were once used in a humorous way by Sydney Smith, who swore by them in a letter to Moore, which we cannot help giving here from Moore's delightful diary : —

MY DEAR MOORE, —

By the beard of the prelate of Canterbury, by the cassock of the prelate of York, by the breakfasts of Rogers, by Luttrell's love of side dishes, I swear I would rather hear you sing than any person I ever heard in my life, male or female. . . . Call me Dissenter, say that my cassock is ill put on, that I know not the delicacies of decimation, and confound the greater and the smaller tithes ; but do not say that I am insensible to your music.

Moore was one of the most welcome of Rogers's guests, for there was a great friendship between the two men. Moore's poetry no longer enjoys the popularity it formerly had. Moore was a manly, inde-

pendent little fellow, a very affectionate husband and father, and a thorough gentleman. "That's as good a creature as ever lived," said Miss Berry of him.

Another interesting character, a frequent guest at Rogers's dinners, especially if Moore were one of the guests, was Luttrell. Of this man little survives but a few bright sayings, but there is no doubt that in his day he largely contributed to the enjoyment of society. On one occasion, Moore thought that a lady paid one of his songs the compliment of tears, which she was endeavoring to conceal, and he was disappointed to find that "she was only putting up her hands to settle her spectacles." "Ah," said Luttrell, "you thought it was *nocte pluit tota*, instead of which it was *redeunt spectacula*." Other good stories are told of Luttrell, which will be found in that repository of anecdote, Tom Moore's life, of which we hope Messrs. Longman will give us a new edition, with a great deal removed which at present keeps out of reading a very delightful book. Well edited, and expurgated of some less interesting matter, a new edition should have a large sale. When Barnes was asked what he thought of Luttrell's epigrams, he replied, "Neat, but feeble;" but in society Luttrell played well up to Moore, and Moore was never so happy in his wit as when Luttrell was a guest also.

Wordsworth we have already referred to as one of Rogers's guests. At one of the dinners in St. James's Place Moore observed to Wordsworth that he had met in some café in Paris a young man who had seen him, whereupon Wordsworth replied, "Oh! *Virgilium tantum vidi*." Moore mentions this as presumption, but the truth is that Wordsworth spoke what he thought, and gave expression to what most would wish to conceal. Wordsworth was not a modest man, but he was scarcely an immodest one. The fact is, that when we think of some immortal things Wordsworth has written, he seems almost justified in his high estimation of himself, and it is only when we remember how much he sent forth that is not worthy of his high fame that we feel that there is a ludicrous side to the *Virgilium tantum vidi* story. As a rule, however, genius and modesty seem to go together.

In Northcote's conversations with Hazlitt, Northcote observes to Hazlitt, "It is droll to see how hard you labor to prop Wordsworth up, and seem to fancy he'll live;" to which Hazlitt replied that he thought Wordsworth stood a better chance

than Lord Byron; but Northcote would none of it. "Do you imagine," said he, "such trifles as descriptions of daisies and idiot boys will not be swept away in the tide of time like straws and weeds by the torrent?" Hazlitt has proved the better prophet so far, inasmuch as Wordsworth's fame never stood higher than it does at this period. The poet of

The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills,

we agree with Hazlitt, has a long fame before him.

When Fox was speaking to Rogers of the pleasures of excitement, Rogers told him he preferred sedatives. He described here the bent of his own mind. He was possessed of fortune, intellect, and judgment. Such a man needed no sallies into the fields of adventure to procure himself an interest in life. His richly stored mind found delight in the contemplation of works of art, in the reading of the classics of the world, and in converse with the finest minds of his time. His opportunities were as unique as were his powers of making use of them, for he had conversed intimately with Fox and the Duke of Wellington, with Grattan and Horne Tooke, with Grenville and Lord Lansdowne, and at Holland House he had listened to the *mots* of Talleyrand, to the rich stores of Macaulay, and to the finest wit of Sydney Smith. His intimacy with Fox was the result of a mutual liking, and Rogers has preserved for us many characteristic thoughts of that charming and irregular spirit. With these immense advantages, it is not to be wondered at that the social world was dazzled, and that the muse of Rogers had honors paid to her, some of which were due to other gifts of the host than to his poetical ones.

The most interesting portion of Rogers's life must have been when he first came to live in St. James's Place. Miss Banks, daughter of Thomas Banks the sculptor, not having favored his suit, he settled down into a bachelor life, and his house became a sort of hospitable hotel for any man of genius whom he met and liked. Not every man liked him at first, and Coleridge took a positive dislike to him, and in a letter to Sir George Beaumont he says of Rogers, "If I believed it possible this man liked me, upon my soul I should feel as if I were tarred and feathered." But this feeling passed away, and a friendship, broken only by death, succeeded. When Byron became famous, and it was found that Rogers and Byron

were friends, Rogers got up another step in the social ladder.

Mr. Clayden thinks, and no doubt rightly, that Rogers's position at Holland House sprang out of his intimacy with Fox. It must have required great tact and some courage to maintain one's footing there and to keep on good terms with Lady Holland. Her good qualities are not so apparent to the outsider as they may have been to those who were honored with her invitations. We say with *her* invitations, for Lord Holland seems to have had little to do with that matter, and once asked Rogers whether he were going "to dine with him to-day," to which Lord Holland received the reply he desired, namely, that Lady Holland had asked him (Rogers). The poet summed up the difference between Lord and Lady Holland thus: "Lord Holland is extremely kind. But that is of course, for he is kindness itself. Her ladyship, too, which is by no means of course, is all graciousness and civility." Lady Holland never strikes us as being quite a lady. She was overbearing, frequently positively rude, and she was capricious in her temper. Lord Holland, indeed, was not master in his own house. Mr. Clayden tells us that when Lady Holland wished to be rid of the masher of that day, then styled fop, she would beg his pardon and ask him to move a little farther off, adding, "There is something on your handkerchief I do not quite like." Fanny Kemble tells us that Lady Holland dropped her handkerchief purposely to make people pick it up, and tried it on with her, but not successfully. Brougham thought she loved to initiate everything, and looked coldly on anything she had no hand in. He proposed an excursion to Rogers, and writes thus as an inducement: "Don't forget how very angry it will make Lady Holland. She hates anybody doing anything." Allen, Lord Holland's secretary, a man of considerable ability, had the courage to tackle this imperious woman, and was rewarded for his courage by being able to live ever after on pleasanter terms with her.

There is a passage in Moore's diary which shows the light in which Lady Holland appeared to him. He says:—

Lord John had dined with Lady Holland the day before, which she took care with her usual *factique* not to tell me. People that wish to meet will never receive any help towards it through her.

In justice to the imperious lady we should add that Moore continues thus:—

An excellent person in her way, however, and I should be ungrateful not to record it; full of good parts as well as of sharp ones.

Macaulay writes in 1833 to his sister Hannah:—

Lady Holland is in a most extraordinary state. She came to Rogers's with Allen in so bad a humor that we were all forced to rally, and make common cause against her. There was not a person at table to whom she was not rude: and none of us were inclined to submit. Rogers sneered; Sydney made merciless sport of her; Tom Moore looked excessively impertinent; Bobus put her down with simple straightforward rudeness; and I treated her with what I meant to be the coldest civility. Allen flew into a rage with us all, and especially with Sydney, whose guffaws, as the Scotch say, were indeed tremendous.

Ticknor tells us in his delightful journals a capital story of his battle with Lady Holland on one occasion, which led to her behaving better when she next met him:

She characteristically remarked to him, who was a New Englander, that she believed New England was originally colonized by convicts sent over from the mother country. Mr. Ticknor replied that he was not aware of it, but that he knew that some of the Vassall family, ancestors of Lady Holland, had settled early in Massachusetts.

Lady Holland was surprised into silence.

Yet, rude and imperious as she was, it is a question whether the qualities of her mind, and even her peculiarities of temper, were not required at the head of a household whose nominal head belonged to the *laissez-aller* school. The reins must be held by some one, and Lord Holland was not one who liked that duty.

To these dinners constantly came Rogers, who told Moore: "There are two parties before whom everybody must appear; *them* [the Hollands] and the police." The interesting intercourse which Rogers was known to have had with Fox of course gave Rogers an ascendancy amongst the visitors at Holland House, for Fox was worshipped by his followers. He must certainly have had a personal charm about him perfectly irresistible. He was so natural, so courteous, so simple in his habits, so fond of letters, and so well versed in them. Like many very self-indulgent men, he gave the indulgence to others he loved himself, and so was easy to get on with. "Never do yourself," said Fox's father, "what you can get any one else to do for you." This was one of the easy-going maxims of a father who actually gave his son money to gamble with.

Nothing great was ever done by Fox, and when at last he came into power he continued the policy he had spent his life in denouncing. A gambler,\* a man of irregular life, and a spendthrift, his manners were so delightful that every one conspired to forgive him, and for half a century after his death he was still esteemed a great politician, through the transmitted love of his friends to their descendants. We have lately had regretfully to hear a great modern politician under-rate Pitt. We cannot help thinking it a proof of the sound judgment of our forefathers that they stood by Pitt in his great struggle—a struggle the success of which gave us, under God, all our subsequent prosperity.

Rogers, of course, was a Whig, and he records with *gusto* any attacks on Pitt. Grattan told him Pitt had not much knowledge, and that Burke had said of his father, "His forte was fancy, his feeble was ignorance." Grattan told Rogers that "Pitt had ruined his country." Again, on another occasion Rogers recounts that Grattan told him that "for twenty years Pitt was an apologist for failure, and an imposer of taxes; in other words, a humbug." This great man, who spent his life in the service of his country, and died poor, has thus been described by two differing politicians as "a humbug" and "a blackguard." Again, we find Grattan telling him "Pitt would be right nineteen times for once that Fox would be right; but that once would be worth all the rest. The heart is wiser than the schools."

Before we part with Grattan it is interesting to recall his declaration given in the little volume of Rogers's recollections, edited by Sharpe:—

My much injured country will have her revenge for all her wrongs: she will send into England, and into the bosom of her Parliament, and the very heart of her constitution, a hundred of the greatest rascals that can be found anywhere.

Rogers did not write very good letters. Indeed, if those given in Mr. Clayden's two volumes are average specimens, his letters have nothing to distinguish them from those of any ordinary person. That he did not write good letters is, to our thinking, a corroborative proof that he wanted original genius. The freshness and the originality which accompany genius make themselves everywhere felt, and

relieve the most commonplace things of their commonplace character. We see this in Byron's letters, we saw it the other day in the delightful ones which Thackeray penned to Mrs. Bloomfield. The individuality of Dickens is stamped on all his letters, and every characteristic of Wordsworth is found in his; so Charles Lamb's letters to Manning are even better than his essays, and innumerable instances of the truth of this will occur to every one.

It does not even appear certain that Rogers much enjoyed the society of men of deep thought. He could follow the wit of Sydney Smith, Luttrell, and Moore, the literary playfulness of Fox, the genial man-of-the-world talk of Scott, the half literary and social and half-political chit-chat of Lord Holland. He could enjoy himself and make others enjoy the clash of brilliant conversation, which revealed all but the depths of the minds of the various men and women who came to his table; but Coleridge was never to Rogers what his other guests were, and Uvedale Price, whose letters are the best, because the most full of idea and thought, in Mr. Clayden's volumes, was thought a bore by Rogers, who sought to avoid him. There is no evidence of the deep and sustained thought of Wordsworth and Coleridge in anything left by Rogers. He perceived the true relations of things with amazing quickness, and gave expression to his opinion with ready and sardonic wit. But it was as the critic of others' thoughts rather than as himself the discoverer in the thought-world that he shone. He found a rough agate of some other mind, and lent it polish. Behind the man of letters was the man of the world, and each was perpetually cropping up over the other according to the society in which he found himself. He took jokes at himself with good temper, as when Byron satirized him, in a fit of fun, in satire which Medwin says was stinging enough. But he could repay as well as receive, and there is something rather unpleasing in hearing that men manœuvred to be the last to quit the dining-room that they might be the hearers, rather than the victims, of Rogers's cutting satire upon others.

He was wont to give as his excuse for his ill-natured sayings, that he had a weak voice, and if he did not say cutting and bitter things, society would pass him by. This was his reason, but no excuse. It amounts to a confession that he preferred to be ill-natured rather than not be talked about and thought witty, and it brings us

\* Fox's father, Gibbon tells us, paid in 1773 his son's debts to the amount of £140,000; reducing himself thereby to £90,000.

round once more to the paradoxical nature of a man who could say such cruel things and do such generous acts. "In his society," said Moore, "one walks upon roses with a constant apprehension of the thorns."

We have not space to particularize each of the guests that have given fame to the meetings in St. James's Place. Besides such giants as Scott and Wordsworth; Coleridge, Byron, and Moore; Thackeray and Dickens; came Lamb with that "head worthy of Aristotle;" Thomas Campbell, Washington Irving, Macaulay, Hallam, Montalembert, Lamartine, and Gladstone. Think what this wonderful old man had seen and heard. He had sat down at dinner with Tom Paine; he had seen Marie Antoinette go to mass with her little pale-faced boy, happily ignorant of the cruel tragedy about to happen to him. He had looked on Louis XVI. with his amiable but unmeaning face; and — never-to-be-forgotten incident! — he had witnessed the great Napoleon mount his white horse at the Palace of St. Cloud, his face "one dead tint of yellow." What a period Rogers covers when we think of him as setting eyes upon Louis XVI. and alive at the death of the Duke of Wellington! He saw France before the great Revolution, saw that struggle of the nations which ended in the victory of 1815, he witnessed the rise of the demand for Reform and the carriage of the bill, the final fall of the Bourbons and of him who still more deserved to fall, the intriguing Louis Philippe. He saw the Irish rebellion of 1798, and the Cabbage-garden Rebellion of 1848. The history of the best part of a century had passed under his observing eye; and he had witnessed the rise and fall of nations, institutions, and men. His cold wit and what Carlyle terms his "sardonic sense" had been employed at one time or other on epigrammatic sayings on all these great men and great events. He had summarized in witty lines the chief features of men, and given Ward a heart by which he got his speeches. He had listened to Wordsworth at his favorite employment of reading his own poems, been rallied by Byron, sung to by Tom Moore, and had listened to the wit of Sheridan. To his table came Grey and Lansdowne and Lyndhurst; here Wellington listened to the beautiful singing of Miss Jervis, and here, by no means to be omitted from the celebrated list, came our greatest modern poet, Tennyson.

In Rogers's last interview with Ma-

cready, the poet quoted with pardonable pleasure the fine line:—

Their very shadows consecrate the ground.

Thus it is with the famous men and women who for half a century graced the meetings in St. James's Place. We do not know whether any tablet records the fact that in this house Samuel Rogers lived. But such a tablet would not be out of place. Such a record would be read a hundred years hence with the same reverence as we should now read a tablet over the doorway of any literary celebrity of the last century, and the record might appropriately close with the line just quoted, with which Rogers bid a lasting adieu to the great actor:—

Their very shadows consecrate the ground.  
G. B.

From The National Review.

#### THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR.

ONE of the principal things which made the French Revolution memorable, was that it represented the "triumph of ideas," which, in the mind of the philosophic Radical of to-day, is in itself an eminently desirable thing. The rest of the world may, however, be pardoned for looking at that great series of events from a somewhat different point of view, and for estimating mere abstract ideas somewhat less highly than do the apostles of culture. This reverence for ideas does not, of course, want for champions. The ideas of the Revolution were not new; they were certainly not original, and they sprang from purely English sources. England was a free country for many generations during which Frenchmen were, as they themselves complained, the victims of an aristocratic tyranny which practically crushed out the life of the nation. The Church in England was reformed and brought into harmony with modern ideas two centuries and a half before France awoke to the iniquities of a Cardinal de Rohan and his satellites. Even unbelief, which counted for so much in the general overturn of France in the eighteenth century, was no new thing. The fool had said in his heart there is no God, and had become corrupt and abominable some thousands of years before the Père Duchesne voided his execrable filth on "the politest nation of Europe." Nay, even the Encyclopædists were anticipated. The "En-



cyclopédie" itself is a huge plagiarism from the English "Encyclopædia" of Chambers, while every idea for which they claim credit may be found in the writings of Hobbes, Toland, Tindal, Shaftesbury, and Woolston, and, it may be added, is put with the greatest force and point by its originators. The simple solution of the whole matter is, that while ideas had been steadily growing and maturing in English minds, the French mind lay comparatively fallow. Then, having suddenly awakened to certain truths, the French philosophers of the eighteenth century fondly imagined that they had a monopoly of wisdom, and boldly undertook to instruct the world in those "principles of '89" which they had borrowed from the English of a century before. Like Candide in El Dorado, they fancied that the pebbles of the highway were nuggets of gold. The English mind had rightly appraised them long before, and had discarded them accordingly. It says but little for the knowledge or the wisdom of a large section of our fellow-countrymen that they should accept these exploded fallacies as unimpeachable truths.

Amongst the "ideas" of the Revolutionary period none took a firmer root or exercised a wider influence than the reform of the existing standards of weights, measures, and time. That changes of some sort were necessary, and, indeed, inevitable, had long been notorious. The English, in their dull, Philistine way, began to modify their system about the middle of the last century. Local rules faded into desuetude, and by the time that Arthur Young set out on his famous tour through France and Italy, he was able to congratulate himself on the fact, that, although there was no uniform measure of land in England, the statute acre was gradually coming into general use, and the statute bushel of eight gallons was commonly accepted. Things in France were by no means so satisfactory. "The infinite perplexity of the measures," says Young (*Travels*, i., 315), "exceeds all comprehension. They differ not only in every province, every district, but almost in every town, and these tormenting variations are found equally in the denominations and contents of the measures of land and corn. . . . There are two national measures of land — the arpent de Paris and the arpent de France — both legal and common measures, notwithstanding which they are of very different contents, and, what is strange to say, they are sometimes confounded by French writ-

ers on agriculture . . . even by societies in their public memoirs." The complaint goes on through three large and closely printed quarto pages, and it is obvious that the grievance was no trifling one. Such as it was, however, it lasted until the Revolution had made considerable headway, and then, in accordance with the new ideas, an attempt was made to introduce an enormous and instantaneous change — to substitute the decimal system for the ancient weights and measures.

Nearly a century has gone by since that time, and it can hardly be contended that the triumph of the decimal system is assured even in France. On general principles, to which the devotees of ideas so constantly appeal, it ought to have been taken up with enthusiasm, and to be by this time adopted by every civilized nation. Ten is a normal number, and "to count by tens is the simplest way of counting." Man has five fingers on each hand, and five toes on each foot — the Philistine has six; the bearing of which observation, as Captain Bunsby would say, lies in the application thereof. It is likewise an incontrovertible fact, that the equator is of certain length, and that it is within the power of human ingenuity to devise a measure which shall be an hundred thousandth or a millionth part of that length. But it does not follow that the man is of necessity a fool who chooses to measure the kerseymer for his small clothes by the cubit, which is according to the measure of a man. As far as ideas are concerned, one standard seems to be as good as another. To count by tens may be the "simplest way of counting," but in the arithmetic of every-day life, a division into halves and quarters and half-quarters is found in practice natural and convenient. For arithmetic of another kind, the ancient Babylonian sexagesimal system, which divides the hour into sixty minutes, and the minute into sixty seconds, has, as Professor Max Müller pointed out not long ago, been found practically useful for several thousand years. The French people, at all events, have not taken very kindly to the proposals of their philosophical guides in this matter. Accounts, it is true, are kept in francs and centimes — mainly because the franc is the equivalent of the livre — but in the every-day affairs of the people, the weights and measures and currency of the old time are retained. The *conducteur* of a Paris omnibus, the market-woman of the Halles, the shop-keeper of the side streets where Mr. Cook's tourists do not go, all charge

their customers in sous, and sell their goods by the half-kilo, the aune, and the demi-litre; while the class above them still talk of louis and écus, as their grand-sires did.

All these things were to be swept away in the Revolution of '89. They were marks of "feudality," traces of the *pied de Charlemagne*, as Victor Hugo calls it, and as such intolerable to the partisans of the movement which had for its shibboleth Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death. As an outward and visible sign of that republican faith, the Church was first destroyed. The Constitution of 1789 had guaranteed *liberté des cultes*: the republic denounced worship of any kind as "superstition," preached the cheerful doctrine that death is an eternal sleep, and, under the Terror, mercilessly guillotined those who were such bad citizens as to seek for moral support in religion, rather than in the windy platitudes of the new philosophy. Having thus got rid of Christianity — having, in its own phrase, "abolished God" and having enthroned a harlot on the high altar of Notre Dame, it seemed only natural to get rid of the calendar, which, alike by its nomenclature and its divisions of time, recalled its ecclesiastical origin. Helen Maria Williams, in her "Residence in France" (p. 12), admits the anti-religious object of the change. "It was desired," she says, "by a different nomenclature of the months, to banish all the commemorations of Christianity, and prepare the way for abolishing religion itself." Thiers, in his history, gives a somewhat different version of the same reason. "The Catholic religion had multiplied *fêtes* most enormously; the Revolution considered it necessary to reduce them as much as possible." In the Convention the change was explained, and supported by the familiar phrases. The Gregorian calendar was condemned as being "anomalous;" because there was no reason for beginning the year on the 1st of January, "except the pleasure of Numa Pompilius, who wished to propitiate the god Janus;" because the division of the year into periods of seven days was "unscientific" — because "the year consists of more than three hundred and sixty-five days, and fifty-two weeks of seven days give only three hundred and sixty-four days;" because a week of seven days does not represent one of the phases of the moon; because it is absurd that the sun should rule the day of twenty-four hours while the moon regulates the years, and so forth. The order of nature

was, in short, out of harmony with the science and philosophy of 1792-93. Had the *savants* of that period been consulted at the creation, they would undoubtedly have suggested sundry notable improvements. The year in that case would not have consisted of three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours, some odd minutes and seconds. A year of one hundred days, divided into ten months of ten days, each of ten hours, each hour of ten minutes, and each minute of ten seconds, was obviously the simplest arrangement, and infinitely preferable to the awkward malarangement with which philosophy had to deal. All that could be done, in view of the perversity of nature, was, therefore, to make the best of the situation, and subdue the recalcitrant months and weeks as completely as possible. If, whilst "correcting the errors of the Gregorian system," the glories of the young republic could be commemorated, so much the better. The National Convention accepted the charge with joy, and referred the work to the Committee of Public Instruction, of which Romme was the chairman, Lagrange, Monge, Dupuis, and Guyton de Morveau the principal members. With them were associated as consultants the principal astronomers and geometers of the Academy of Sciences.

Romme, it should be noted, was a singular specimen of the philosopher turned politician — a race of which we have had some examples in England of late years — and was a curious mixture of excellent intentions and obstinate wrong-headedness. He was a professor of mathematics; a man of great abilities, if not of genius; sincere doubtless, but extravagantly bigoted; a dangerous man politically, and the more dangerous because of his honesty. Michelet — who is perhaps a little given to gushing over the heroes of the Revolution — says of him, that "with the figure of Socrates he had the profound wisdom, the austere benevolence of a sage, of a hero, of a martyr." He early dabbled in politics, and, as seems inevitable with men of his temper, attached himself to the extreme section of the Radical party. When the Revolution broke out he was acting as tutor to the young Count Stroganoff, whom he had brought to Paris for the purpose of completing his education. Romme's notions of his duty in this matter may be guessed by the fact that he took the lead to the sittings of the National Assembly, and to the meetings of Jacobin clubs and revolutionary committees. The empress Cath-

erine heard what was going on, and not unnaturally ordered the return of the young Count Stroganoff to Russia. Romme retired to Auvergne; turned his attention to agriculture; talked Jacobinism to his neighbors, and was sent by them, as delegate, to the National Convention, where he took his place on the Mountain and devoted himself to the task of remodeling society on democratically philosophic principles. Under the Terror he prospered, but in the reaction which followed the death of Robespierre he was arrested and brought to trial, "not for what he had done, but for what he was," and dramatically ended his life by stabbing himself at the bar of the military tribunal which had condemned him (17th June, 1795).

The republican calendar was the one achievement by which his name has been preserved from oblivion. He had apparently prepared everything, and the work of the committee was reduced to a minimum. They reported on September 20th, 1793, and a fortnight later (October 5th) their report was adopted with some modifications. Romme was the presiding spirit throughout:—

His stoical genius [says Michelet], his austere faith in pure reason, appeared in his calendar. No name of saint or hero; nothing which could afford an excuse for idolatry. For the names of the months, eternal ideas; justice, equality, etc. Two months only were named from their sublime associations. June was called "the Oath of the Tennis Court month" (in memory, of course, of the scene of June 20th, 1789), and July was "the Bastille month." For the rest nothing but numerals; days and decades were distinguished only by figures. Days followed days, equal in duty, equal in labor. Time put on the unvarying face of eternity. This extraordinary austerity did not prevent the new calendar from being well received. The people were hungry and thirsty after truth. (*Histoire de la Révolution Française*, tome viii., 176.)

It was, perhaps, the hunger and thirst after truth which caused Romme to admit to the constitutional Bishop Grégoire, himself an ardent member of the Mountain, that one of the principal objects of the new calendar was "the suppression of Sunday."

Five days later the event was celebrated by a *fête* at Arras—the little town best known to fame as the birth-place of Robespierre. The performances of that day excited great enthusiasm in Republican bosoms at the time, and there are still some persons who profess to consider them "sublime and affecting." To Englishmen—"inaccessible to ideas" as

Heine declares them to be—they are likely to appear the reverse of sublime, like so many of the theatrical performances of the Revolution. It is said that twenty thousand people walked in procession, but the figure is probably greatly exaggerated. They were divided into groups according to their ages, and represented the months. Following them came a little "sacred group," representing the supplementary days which made up the republican year, and, last of all, the representative of leap year—a venerable centenarian—who, when the march past was over, solemnly planted a tree of liberty. There were beves of virgins in white, and parties of artisans "who consecrated their tools by touching the tree of liberty with them." The elders grouped themselves around it, and ate and drank while the youths and maidens waited upon them. "Thus, before idolatrous Belgium," says Michelet, "before the barbarian army which was bringing back to us its false gods, republican France showed herself pure, strong, and pacific, playing the sacred drama of time, celebrating the new era, the greatest that this planet had seen since the beginning of the age."

The modifications in "the sacred drama of time" upon which the Convention insisted were somewhat extensive. In the first place, the names of the months with their (more or less) "sublime associations" were swept away, the Convention preferring the chaste simplicity of the ordinal numbers. For the rest, they succeeded in producing the most admired disorder under the pretext of simplicity and regularity. To begin with, the year was divided into twelve months, each of thirty days, and completed by five days superadded (*jours complémentaires*), with an additional day in leap year. The week, "as measuring exactly neither the changes of the moon, nor the months, nor the seasons, nor the year," was suppressed, and each month divided into three decades or periods of ten days each. The day was to be divided into ten parts, each of which was to be divided into ten others so as to complete the metrical system. It is hardly necessary to say that, with all their enthusiasm for the scientific symmetry of their measurement of time, the Convention hesitated to take a step which would, at one stroke, have rendered useless every watch and clock in France. The latter portion of the scheme was consequently adjourned for a year, and, happily, never heard of again. Thiers says that the dials were actually

ordered, but his accuracy is not always unimpeachable, and I can discover no mention of these dials by any other writer. Enough was left of the scheme, however, to create abundant confusion. Before the new calendar had been undertaken by Romme the Convention had formally decreed the rearrangement of the era upon a republican basis. "Year II. of the republic" was to begin on January 1st, 1793, but the beginning of the new era had already been fixed for September 22nd, 1792. In this way the first year of the republic had been decreed to consist of three months and nine days. When Romme's project was adopted this arrangement was set aside, and it was decided that the acts of the Convention, passed between January 1st, 1793, and September 22nd of the same year, which were already dated "Year II. of the Republic," should be considered as belonging to "Year I."

Another source of confusion was speedily apparent. The system of numbering the days and months was found intolerably irksome. Englishmen who have to deal with Quakers of the old school, who consider the use of the common names of the days and months a concession to worldliness, find the phrases of the Friends confusing. But if they object to "first day of first month" for "first of January," what must have been the feelings of the average French *bourgeois*, who found himself compelled not merely to remember that *le premier jour du premier mois de la première année* stood for September 22nd, 1792, but that he had to translate every other date given to him by the light of that concise and elegant phrase? The popular mind demanded also something less abstract, and, according to Montgailard, the committee was not equal to the occasion. "This Hejira of crime and in-

eptitude was," he says in his "Etat de France" (p. 51), "conceived in one of those orgies to which the deputies gave up their nights. There was a question of giving to Venus the month of May, and that of September to Bacchus; but, in spite of La Harpe and of Chénier, the spirit of the *sans-culottes* triumphed over these amiable illusions, and over the poetry of antiquity which had created our weeks and our months, and they obtained names which belong to no language." A poet was therefore called in to supplement the scientific labors of Romme. Like most of his race in these revolutionary days, he was not a giant of intellect, standing, as he did, on the same poetical plane with Robespierre and Barère. He is known to posterity as Fabre d'Eglantine—a name, which, as one of his admirers says, is "a poem in itself"—but his real name was Philippe Fabre—*Anglice*, Philip Smith. The "d'Eglantine" was assumed because the Sieur Fabre had gained the Eglantine prize at a *concours* in Provence—a competition of one of those societies which, as Macaulay says, "turn people who might have been thriving attorneys and useful apothecaries into small wits and bad poets." In the peaceable days before the Revolution, Fabre achieved a certain species of reputation by the publication of two or three very indifferent comedies and a well-meaning but rather foolish book called "*L'Histoire Naturelle dans le Cours des Saisons*." It seemed, therefore, quite natural to hand over to him the task of finding names for the months and days. He entered on his task with alacrity, and, on the 25th October, presented his new and fantastic calendar. The year was to begin on September 22nd, and the calendar took the following order:—

## AUTUMN.

Vendémiaire . . .	Vintage month . . .	Sept. 22 to Oct. 21, inclusive.
Brumaire . . . .	Foggy month . . . .	Oct. 22 " Nov. 20, "
Frimaire . . . .	Frost month . . . .	Nov. 21 " Dec. 20, "

## WINTER.

Nivose . . . . .	Snowy month . . . .	Dec. 21 " Jan. 19, "
Pluviose . . . .	Rainy month . . . .	Jan. 20 " Feb. 18, "
Ventose . . . . .	Windy month . . . .	Feb. 19 " Mar. 20, "

## SPRING.

Germinal . . . .	Budding month . . .	Mar. 21 " April 19, "
Floréal . . . . .	Flowery month . . .	April 20 " May 19, "
Prairial . . . . .	Pasture month . . . .	May 20 " June 18, "

## SUMMER.

Messidor . . . .	Harvest month . . .	June 19 " July 18, "
Fervidor (afterwards Thermidor) . . .	Hot month . . . . .	July 19 " Aug. 17, "
Fructidor . . . .	Fruit month . . . . .	Aug. 18 " Sept. 16, "

The year, it will be observed, was thus left incomplete, only three hundred and sixty days being accounted for. In order to complete it, the five "supplementary days" already mentioned were added. To those days was appropriated the name of *Sansculottides*, Festivals of the Unbreached; "a name," says Thiers, "which must be conceded to the time, and which is not more absurd than many others adopted by the nations." Each day had its special dedication. That of September 17, was, according to Thiers, given to genius: 18, labor; 19, noble actions; 20, rewards; and 21, opinion. Thiers is again slightly inaccurate. The order, as given in contemporary documents, and especially in the remarkable one reproduced in *fac simile* by M. Arsène Housaye, in his "Notre Dame de Thermidor," is virtue, genius, labor, opinion, rewards. The sixth *Sansculottide*, in leap year, was, according to Larousse, to be called by that name *par excellence*. Thiers, however, asserts that it was to be called the Festival of the Revolution, and to be dedicated to a grand ceremony in which the entire nation should celebrate their enfranchisement and renew the oath to be free or die. Writing presumably from oral tradition, the same historian says of the day dedicated to opinion: "This festival, absolutely original and perfectly adapted to the French character, was to be a sort of political carnival of twenty-four hours, during which the people should be allowed to say what they pleased concerning every public man." Considering that at the moment when the calendar was under discussion men and women—nay, even boys and girls—were being sent to the guillotine for "looking like aristocrats," for wearing a wig of fair hair, for "desecrating" a dead stump which some patriotic gang of ruffians had dubbed a "tree of liberty," and even for the heinous crime of being "suspected of being suspect," it is obvious that the guarantees of the Carnival of Opinion were not unimpeachable. Thiers, however, who is, like so many of his countrymen, the slave of phrases, thinks that "nothing could be more moral or more grand than this idea," and protests against its being made the object of ridicule, because, as he reminds his readers in the sham classicality of the day, "the Romans have not been considered ridiculous because on the day of triumph the soldier, placed behind the car of the triumphal general, was at liberty to say whatever his anger or his mirth suggested."

But the work of the poetical Fabre was not complete. Romme's austere calendar had left nothing for the popular imagination to feed upon. Even the new names of the months were not enough, though enthusiastic republicans found them "charming, and altogether poetical," and possessed of "an imitative harmony (? melody) in their terminations," as thus (the sentence will hardly bear translation):—

Pour l'automne (vendémiaire, etc.) un son grave et une mesure moyenne; pour l'hiver (nivose, etc.) un son lourd et une mesure longue; pour le printemps (germinal, etc.) un son gai et une mesure brève; pour l'été (messidor, etc.) un son sonore et une mesure large.

The days of the week, or rather of the decade, were at the outset named: 1, Primidi; 2, Duodi; 3, Tridi; 4, Quartidi; 5, Quintidi; 6, Sextidi; 7, Septidi; 8, Octidi; 9, Nonidi; and 10, Décadi, an arrangement obviously recommended by its convenience and by the fact that "to count by ten is the simplest way of counting." A Wednesday, for example, may fall on any day of any month; but in the new calendar a Quartidi must always fall on the 4th, 14th, or 24th of the month, and so on. Still the popular mind was unsatisfied, and ungratefully craved for something more than scientific accuracy. That something Fabre—always "of the Eglantine," undertook to supply. The old Catholic almanac had been filled with the names of the saints; some of them Biblical personages, some mythical, some very modern men and women, and not a few wholly fabulous. The space thus occupied in the calendar was now filled up with the names of domestic products, implements of agriculture, or domestic animals, placed according to their appearance in the course of the agricultural operations of the year. Michelet, as usual, grows enthusiastic over this poetical nomenclature:—

Les jours sont nommés [he says] d'après les récoltes de sorte que l'ensemble est comme un manuel de travail pour l'homme des champs; sa vie s'associe jour par jour à celle de la nature. Quoi de mieux approprié à un peuple tout agricole, comme l'était la France alors? Les noms des mois tirés ou du climat ou des récoltes, sont si heureux, si expressifs, d'un tel charme mélodique qu'ils entrèrent à l'instant aux cœurs de tous et n'en sont point sortis. Ils composent aujourd'hui une partie de notre héritage, une des créatures toujours vivantes où la Revolution subsiste et durera toujours.

An "exchequer of words" truly, but



hardly of wise ones; rather of the phrases which pass current with the *idéologues* whom the first Napoleon hated so cordially. Nothing, if we think of it, can be much more absurd than these sentences. At the end of the eighteenth century France was a manufacturing and by no means exclusively an agricultural country; the townsfolk did not care at all for the "happy, expressive, charming, and melodious" names of the months; the peasantry still clung to their saints' days, and—if M. Babeau is to be believed—still supported their Church and their clergy in spite of the Convention. It is not surprising, therefore, that the new way of naming the days never became very popular,\* in spite of the mixture of science and sentiment, which Helen Maria

Williams found so consolatory in her prison during the Terror. The new calendar was, she says, "so philosophical and so pleasing to the imagination that, amidst the sanguinary measures of those days, it seems to the oppressed heart what a solitary spot of fresh verdure appears to the eye amidst the cragginess of lowering rocks or the gloom of savage deserts."\*

In this system every Quintidi, or half-decade, is dedicated to an animal, and every Décadi to an agricultural implement, except in the month of Nivose (21 Dec. to 19 Jan.), when, vegetation being at a standstill, the days commemorate the minerals useful in agriculture. A page of this fantastic calendar will, however, give a better idea of it than a sheet of description.

VENDEMAIRE, AN. II.					
1 <sup>re</sup> Décade . . .	Primidi . . . . .	1	Raisin . . . . .	Septembre, 1793.	22
	Duodi . . . . .	2	Safran . . . . .		23
	Tridi . . . . .	3	Châtaigne . . . . .		24
	Quartidi . . . . .	4	Colchique . . . . .		25
	Quintidi . . . . .	5	Cheval . . . . .		26
	Sextidi . . . . .	6	Balsamine . . . . .		27
	Septidi . . . . .	7	Carotte . . . . .		28
	Octidi . . . . .	8	Amaranthe . . . . .		29
	Nonidi . . . . .	9	Panais . . . . .		30
	Décadi . . . . .	10	Cuve . . . . .		1
2 <sup>me</sup> Décade . . .	Primidi . . . . .	11	Pomme de Terre . . . . .	Octobre, 1793.	2
	Duodi . . . . .	12	Immortelle . . . . .		3
	Tridi . . . . .	13	Potiron . . . . .		4
	Quartidi . . . . .	14	Réséda . . . . .		5
	Quintidi . . . . .	15	Ane . . . . .		6
	Sextidi . . . . .	16	Belle de Nuit . . . . .		7
	Septidi . . . . .	17	Citrouille . . . . .		8
	Octidi . . . . .	18	Sarrasin . . . . .		9
	Nonidi . . . . .	19	Tournesol . . . . .		10
	Décadi . . . . .	20	Pressoir . . . . .		11
3 <sup>me</sup> Décade . . .	Primidi . . . . .	21	Chanvre . . . . .		12
	Duodi . . . . .	22	Pêche . . . . .		13
	Tridi . . . . .	23	Navet . . . . .		14
	Quartidi . . . . .	24	Amarylles . . . . .		15
	Quintidi . . . . .	25	Bœuf . . . . .		16
	Sextidi . . . . .	26	Aubergine . . . . .		17
	Septidi . . . . .	27	Piment . . . . .		18
	Octidi . . . . .	28	Tomate . . . . .		19
	Nonidi . . . . .	29	Orge . . . . .		20
	Décadi . . . . .	30	Tonneau . . . . .		21

Thiers and Michelet, notwithstanding their marked partiality for everything re-

\* "Le peuple en général ne se sommet qu'avec peine à toutes ces sales nouveautés, et il se moque publiquement à Paris du Germinal, de la Décadi, et du Primidi. Ou est obligé d'accorder une grande surveillance dans les campagnes au Calendrier Républicain et il n'est pas de Dimanche où on ne mette en prison de malheureux paysans s'ils sont vêtus plus proprement que les autres jours de la semaine." (Montgaillard, Suite de l'Etat de France: Londres, 1794.)

publican, and their willingness to adopt and apologize for even the wildest vagaries of the Jacobins, pass over this fantastic folly with but the barest mention; appear, indeed, hardly conscious of its existence.

\* Letters, etc., by Helen Maria Williams, vol. i., p. 103. It is to be noted that there are three sets of Letters by this lady, one of which appears to have been written in Paris; the others from her recollections of the Revolution.

As a matter of fact, it lasted but a very short time. When it was first put forth the popular mania for classical *prénoms*, which had turned so many honest Jacques and Jeans and Pierres into Catons, Scipions, Timoleons, Brutuses, and the like, was beginning to die out, and enthusiastic republicans named their children after the vegetables enumerated in Fabre's absurd catalogue. Thus, General Doppet was Pervenche Doppet; General Peyron, Myrte Peyron; General Lamier, Peuplier Lamier; and so on. But there were difficulties in the way. The names had been chosen without any very intelligible reason, and not a few seem to have been inserted out of sheer perverseness, or that vulgar nastiness which seems ingrained in the Frenchman of the lower-middle class. It might be very well to call one's child Laurier or Lys or Myrte, but the most ardent Jacobin would draw the line at the names of Parsley, Pumpkin, Carrot, Turnip, Onion, Asparagus, and Dandelion, all of which have in slang a most offensive significance. Other calendars were consequently put forth, stuffed with classical and historical names, but none appear to have had more than the briefest life. Few, in fact, lived beyond the first or second numbers, so that, failing Fabre's burlesque catalogue and the saints of the displaced Roman calendar, people were compelled to fall back for *prénoms* upon family associations or schoolboy recollections of the classics.

The republican historians of the Revolution have, like Thiers, chosen to represent the nation as welcoming the new calendar with enthusiasm, but it is not easy to find a trace of anything of the kind in non-official papers. The reason was possibly hardly that assigned by a writer in the *Quarterly Review* for 1812, who attributes to the French people a fondness, which they were certainly far from feeling, for "the 'Flos Sanctorum,' the 'Nouveau Parterre des Fleurs des Vies des Saints,' and the numberless other compilations of a similar kind, which are almost as amusing and quite as veracious as the Arabian Tales." It is, indeed, far more probable that the calendar of Romme and Fabre was little liked because it appealed to the rural population, while the Revolution was notoriously a thing of the towns and cities. Even there, however, whatever of latent piety there was — and it is now known that there was far more than is commonly believed, was offended by the ostentatious repudiation of every trace of religion in the new calendar. But there

was an even stronger reason for the unpopularity of the new arrangement. From time immemorial, Sunday had been a holiday. The claims of religion having been duly acknowledged by attendance at mass in the early part of the day, the hours remaining had been given up to festivity, to rural excursions, "barrier balls," and so forth. The new distribution of time gave only three holidays instead of four in every month, and, under the direction of the professors of the "austere faith of pure reason," even these holidays were to be devoted to the contemplation and commemoration of abstract ideas. The new calendar had scarcely been adopted when Robespierre obtained a decree to this effect in the National Convention. By this decree, which bears date "18 Floréal, An II." (May 17, 1794), every Décadi was made a feast in the following order: "Of the Supreme Being; of Human Nature; of the French People; the Benefactors of Humanity; the Martyrs of Liberty; Liberty and Equality; the Republic; the Liberty of the World; the Love of Country; Hatred to Tyrants and Traitors; Truth; Justice; Chastity; Glory; Friendship; Frugality; Courage; Good Faith; Disinterestedness; Stoicism; Love; Conjugal Fidelity; Paternal Love; Maternal Tenderness; Filial Piety; Infancy; Youth; Maturity; Old Age; Misfortune; Agriculture; Industry; Our Ancestors; Posterity; and, finally, Happiness."

In the early days of the Revolution, Mirabeau had warned his colleagues that if they attempted to abolish Christianity they would inevitably prepare the way for the annihilation of their work and themselves. The event proved the correctness of this anticipation. The work of completely "de-Christianizing the republic" had scarcely begun when Robespierre and his fellows were sent to the guillotine. Of the *fêtes* just enumerated, one, and one only, was celebrated — that *Fête de l'Etre Suprême*, on Décadi 20 Prairial, An. II., or, as we say, Sunday, 8th June, 1794, when Robespierre, in sky-blue coat made for the occasion, white silk waistcoat embroidered with silver, black silk breeches, white stockings, and shoe-buckles of gold, made a speech in the Tuileries, now National Gardens, which Carlyle asserts to have been "the scraggiest prophetic discourse ever uttered." The *fête* was hardly successful. Neither the oration of the dictator, nor the "set piece" of fireworks to which he applied the torch, appears to have impressed the popular imagination. "*Avec ton Etre Suprême*," said Billaud-

Varennes, ex-Jesuit and present Jacobin, "*tu commences à m'embêter*," and the people of Paris began to think with Billaud. The end of the Terror was near at hand. On the fifth Décadi from this 20 Prairial — on Thermidor 10, or Monday 28th July next following, that is to say — a procession of carts laden with Terrorists, Robespierre wearing the sky-blue coat made for the *fête* in one of them, fared forth from the Palace of Justice to the Place de la Revolution, where the last act of the ghastly drama of the Terror was consummated.

Four months earlier, Fabre had gone to his account. Michelet, with characteristic inaccuracy in points of detail, says that he "lived through only four months of his calendar." As a matter of fact, his report, embodying the fantastic nomenclature given above, was presented to the Convention 4 Brumaire, An. II. (25 Oct. 1793), and at once adopted. He passed the winter after the usual fashion of the "patriots" of the Terror, in profligacy and debauchery. On 15 Ventose, An. II. (5 March, 1794), he was arrested, and on the 16 Germinal (5 April) of the same year he went to the guillotine with Danton. Michelet imagines that he will be immortal because he "listened to nature and found the song of the year;" from which we are to imagine that he was a pure sentimentalist, carried away by honest and respectable enthusiasm. According to Thiers he was nothing of the kind. In his account of the trial of the Girondins, or rather of the atrocious parody of legal proceedings which sent Brissot, Vergniaud, Gensonné, and their brethren to the scaffold, Thiers (iii., 237) describes their accusers with unmixed scorn and contempt. Chabot, the ex-Capuchin, who was the chief of them, was, he says, "a hot-headed and base-minded man," but Fabre was worse than he. Like Chabot, he was suspected of using his official knowledge for stock-exchange swindling, and of embezzling the funds of the India Company, while in order to regain his waning popularity he "made a more cautious, but also a more perfidious deposition, in which he insinuated that the intention of suffering the massacre and robbery of the Garde Meuble to be perpetrated had most probably entered into the plans of the Girondists." It was against this charge that Vergniaud indignantly refused to defend himself. Mercier, of the "*Tableau de Paris*," is even more explicit than Thiers, accusing Fabre of being "a promoter of assassinations,"

and of amassing wealth by the grossest corruption.

When fairly in working order, the new calendar, scientifically perfect though it was supposed to be, was found to swarm with practical inconveniences. One which was pointed out as inevitable, even before the scheme was adopted, was that it was adapted only to the meridian of Paris. The "poetical and sonorous" names of the months were wholly inapplicable in the south and west, and still less fitted for use in those neighboring countries which, in the opinion of enthusiastic revolutionaries, were anxious to come under the ægis of the "mother of republics." Pending that consummation, another and perhaps a greater practical inconvenience arose from the necessity for dating everything twice over; once to comply with the law of the republic, and again to make things intelligible to the world outside, which still held to the Gregorian calendar. Of course it is highly gratifying to the scientific mind to date a legal document "10 Messidor, An. II.," but in practice it is rather inconvenient to ransack one's memory or refer to an almanac to find out that the rest of the world knows the date only as 28 June, 1794.

Napoleon, whose weakness was certainly not a want of common sense, speedily made the discovery, and resolved upon a reform before he had long held the reins as first consul. When in April, 1801, freedom of worship was restored, and it ceased to be a crime to say one's prayers in public, the first step was taken by the revival of Sunday. The Décadi was not abolished, but on Sundays the public offices were closed, whether they agreed with the Décadi or not — an arrangement which commonly led to the observance of both days. The change was universally popular. The churches were thronged on Sunday mornings, and the old merry-making of the afternoon and evening, never wholly suppressed, was renewed with more vigor than ever. When the empire was fairly established, another step was taken by the presentation to the Senate on the 15 Fructidor, An. XIII. (2 Sept. 1805) by Regnard de St. Jean d'Angély and Mounier, as representatives of the government, of a *Senatus Consultum*, by which the calendar was restored, as it existed before the law of October, 1793. A committee was forthwith appointed, under the presidency of the illustrious La Place, which at once reported. On 27 Fructidor, An. XIII. (14 Sept.) the proposal of the imperial government was

adopted without debate, and on the 1st January following, a date corresponding to 11 Nivose, An. XIV., the revolutionary calendar ceased to be. It had lasted nominally for fourteen years, but as it was not brought into operation until 12 October, 1793, its actual life was only twelve years and eighty-seven days. During that limited space of time, however, it created a perfectly unequalled amount of trouble and inconvenience; it may be doubted, indeed, whether any human invention has ever given a thousandth part of the annoyance to inoffensive people which has been caused by the scientific "idea" of the mathematical Romme and his coadjutor, Fabre, the poetaster and stock-jobber.

One thing only remains to be added. The completion of the new calendar was thought important enough to be commemorated by a medal, and a large and pretentious one, adorned with an orthographical blunder, was accordingly struck. On the obverse is the well-known figure by Duvivier, of France, helmed, and seated in a classic chair, with the fasces, etc. Legend: *République Une et Indivisible* (in exergue) *Nation Française*. Reverse: In the upper segment of the circular field three signs of the Zodiac, Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius, the sun being shown as entering the first in allusion to the Autumnal equinox (22 Sept. 1792), the date of the proclamation of the French republic. Beneath the signs are the words, *Ere Française commencée à l'Equinoxe d'Automn (sic) 22 Sept. 1792 9 heures 18 min. 30 sec. du Matin à Paris*.

FRANCIS HITCHMAN.

From The Nineteenth Century.  
THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,  
And catch the manners living as they rise:  
Laugh when we must, be candid when we can.

It is only since I came to live in London, some six months ago, that I have seriously thought about the art of conversation.

My father and mother are both fond of talking, yet I never remember hearing what I now recognize as conversation at home. This may be partly accounted for by the fact of my father taking in none of our leading reviews and magazines, *Sunday at Home* and the *Gardener's Chronicle* hardly filling the intellectual void thus wilfully created. At the same time the dulness of their lives may have some-

thing to say to this; country surroundings and pursuits provide poor material for conversation, and, outside a charmed circle in London society, to talk agreeably about nothing, or almost nothing, does not come easily to ordinary people. Shut out, then, as they are from the stimulating influences of the periodical press, and of a second post — no second post meaning the London papers a day old — it will readily be imagined that my parents talk of little worth talking about, and that I have learned little from them. My father's attempts are limited to what are familiarly styled travellers' tales, collated from a wide reading of travels, particularly polar travels; my mother's to fairly accurate observations upon the obvious, such, for instance, as the abundance of our apple blossom, or the scarceness of good plain cooks.

Sometimes, however — indeed, oftener than is supposed — a parent's example becomes useful as a warning when it breaks down as a model; and in this indirect way I have been able to turn both my father's and my mother's *quasi* conversation to good account. They have illustrated for me two different but equally certain methods of what has been finely called beheading conversation.

I am afraid I must pass over my mother's method as radically vicious to all time; my father's, however, may certainly have had its vogue, for on more than one occasion I have heard him cited by gentlemen of his own age and standing in our neighborhood as a valuable addition to their social gatherings on the ground of his being full of information. There is a Rip Van Winkleishness about this idea which is amusing. As all know, conversation is subject to sentimental regulations which the lapse of every few years recasts. Thus the art of conversation varies with the mental habit of the day, and its most agreeable expression is that which best reflects the mental needs and interests of its day. My poor father and his simple admirers are sadly out of date. In the society I am anxious to frequent, to be full of information, particularly of the outlandish information my sire deals in, is, as I am told, to be voted quite a bore. But to admit that the tone of our conversation changes with the shifting needs of our contemporary thought, or that the taste of one time is the distaste of another time, is not of itself enough. Seriously to consider the art of conversation of our own day, we must also bear in mind that the character of

conversation itself has changed much in the same way as the character of a business changes, when from a private concern it becomes a company, and when — to use the technical expression — its shares are offered to the public. The reason for this change of character is not far to seek. The possibilities of social intercourse and social culture — integral parts, as we must suppose them to be, both of a polite society and a polite style of conversation — have already so increased, and are daily so facilitated and so increasing, that we are being forced out of one into many social groups, according to our social circumstances, tastes, and ambitions; like the kingdom of Heaven, society and the conversation of society now boast of many mansions. These social groups are knit together by their common allegiance to the taste and tone of the time, to what is styled the spirit of the age. They all observe and respect fundamental points of agreement. But, admitting, as it were, the principle of an Act of Uniformity in social æsthetics, each group interprets the act very much to its own liking and requirements. It is this expansion of society into societies which has brought about the change in the character of our conversation upon which I am insisting. Conversation, from being almost a private concern, has become a public concern.

Thence comes it that the art of conversation now has its different schools; just as the arts of painting, of music, and of literature have their schools — every school affecting its own method, its own tests, its own jargon — so many different means to one and the same end, the best expression of art. Take painting: the French school insists on a standard of drawing and enjoins a method of color which the English school does not insist upon and does not enjoin, yet the expression of the best art is the result both schools are honestly striving to attain. In this way the method and tests and jargon of conversation vary with the school, or rather the society, applying them. They vary as that society is leisured or professional, educated or highly educated, grave or gay. With this variation the student of the art of conversation will do well to reckon. He has to study the method of the society in which he hopes to enjoy the fruit of his labor, but to gather figs and grapes he need not perplex himself with the botany of thorns and thistles. He need only master the tillage of fig-trees and vines.

The society whose conversational method I have decided to study is essentially leisured, and seems to me wholly sympathetic. Professional and learned social circles command my respect, but not my inclination. I cannot project myself into their atmosphere. They appeal to none of my instincts, they awaken no impression. Lord Byron used to say that the man who made the best first impression upon him he ever met subsequently picked his pocket; but favorable first impressions are things which I for one refuse to ignore. Now the first step in all æsthetic criticism, as Mr. Oscar Wilde says, is to realize our impressions. Of themselves, impressions are rather shadowy things; they want focussing into distinct and distinguishing opinions. From being to all practical purposes supine and dim-sighted, they must become active, discerning, and articulate. This activity, clear-sightedness, and articulation can only be given them by exercise and practice. "All the treatises in the world," says somebody somewhere, "are not equal to giving one a view in a moment." Nor will the most imperative first impressions. We must get into actual touch with them. To have impressions about charity is not the same thing as being charitable; we are only charitable when we have realized our impressions about charity, got into actual touch with charity, by giving something away. In the same way, to have vivid impressions about the charm of smart society's conversation will never of themselves make me proficient in the art of charming smart society. I must realize these impressions. I must be given a real view of smart society.

How is this to be done? As I have tried to show, different societies have different standards of taste. As pabulum for conversation, what is meat at Melton may be thought poison, or at all events garbage, at Oxford. What to eat, what to drink, and what to avoid in the social and conversational climate you prefer, can only be learned by noticing what the individuals who thrive best in that climate eat, drink, and avoid. Even then, unless, as Mr. Carlyle read books "with the flash of the eye," you pick up things with a flash of the understanding, this noticing of others before setting up on your own account is not the affair of a moment, it is an affair of special training, and it may become as tedious as working at the antique and the skeleton before being allowed to attack the life-model becomes to an art student. But, further, the people whose observ-



ances you mean to copy, the models upon which you hope to model yourself, must be got at; and here I am met by a veritably disagreeable difficulty.

Had it been a school of painting or a school of music, whose method I yearned to master, its theory in print and its palpable expressions on canvas or in sound are certain, humanly speaking, to be accessible. If I wish to realize my impressions of Velasquez at the pains of a long journey and a horrid hotel, I can do so at Madrid. If I wish to realize my impressions of Wagner, I can subscribe to the Richter concerts, or, better still, fare to Bayreuth. Then painting and music have an imposing literature; their several schools, their several scribes and critics. But this art of conversation has no foundations laid on the rock of time, force, and opinion. The particular school of the art of conversation I wish to study has neither galleries nor concert-rooms, neither an historic nor a contemporary critical literature.

Conversation, with its schools, is itself a branch of the science and art of speech. Rhetoric, elocution, and debate are branches of this great science; each with their several schools. But the schools of rhetoric, and elocution, and debate are, as it were, free schools, open to the general public; whereas the schools of polite conversation are not free — indeed, so far from being free, they are exclusive, and in some degree exquisite. We cannot, because we wish to do so, or because our idiosyncrasy or turn of mind sways us thither, *abonner* ourselves to a school of literary or *beau monde*, of artistic or sporting, society and conversation. Unless the accident of birth or of circumstances places us within the radius of a literary or a fashionable circle, admission to its intimate fellowship becomes a question in the former case of merit or repute, in the latter of wealth or invitation.

Now in my own case, that of a candidate for admission to the latter by invitation, this question of invitation — confusing enough of itself — is further perplexed by the facts that the only two families I know in London live in what I heard rather picturesquely called the wildest part of South Kensington, and that they are given neither to hospitality nor to going out. Indeed, had it not been that I lately received some assistance and stimulus from an unexpected quarter, I should seriously think of taking back my defeated social gifts to the local breeds of sheep and cattle, the local littlenesses of a clay district, the apple blossom and polar trav-

els of home. To have no engagements in London is an unchartered freedom, not only of a tiring, but a depressing kind, and I begin to "feel the weight of vain desires." But a fortnight ago I ran up against my old schoolfellow, Sebastian P. I remembered him perfectly, whilst his pleasure at seeing me again would have gratified a pelican in the wilderness.

Sebastian — we all called him by his christian name — went up to the top of the school very quickly, but as lower boys we happened twice to be in the same form together. He was a peculiar-looking boy, with very fat thighs, which the boys immediately next him in form pinched at all decent and possible intervals during schooltime. Sebastian was not a Spartan youth, and this generally ended in his having to go down to the bottom of the form for interrupting the "school." For my part I honestly liked Sebastian, and I often got him to lend me a "tizzy," as we called a sixpence, after school. But I always pinched him, not because I liked pinching him, as himself, as Sebastian, but because I always pinched any boy whom all the other boys pinched. This just now is rather interesting, for I suppose it to have been the young embryo of my present strong social instinct.

There is a tenderness about old associations to which few persons can be quite insensible, so within the last few days Sebastian and I have seen a good deal of each other. I still like him, and it is very pleasant to like a person without any incumbrance to pinch him. Indeed, from a social point of view, the incumbrance lies all the other way, for I find Sebastian moves much in society, and is metaphorically petted, and not pinched. Both his looking-glasses are crammed with invitation cards to parties. I was struck with the number of invitations "from 4 to 7;" but Sebastian has since explained that these are parties solely got up for purposes of conversation, "conversational orgies," he happily styled them. These gatherings appear to be, from his description, the modernized equivalent of the *salons* of which we hear so much in memoirs and elsewhere — now, happily, things of the past. All this, it will readily be imagined, was of special and opportune interest for me; and I am pleased to say that, without showing the weakness of my own hand, I managed — much as I used to manage to borrow the tizzy — to get a good deal out of Sebastian.

After several talks around the subject of conversation generally, and what con-

stitutes success in conversation, Sebastian showed me yesterday what he variously calls "the implements of the trade," and his "box of tricks." They consist of a neatly shelved accumulation of reviews and magazines, the collection extending over two years or more. Sebastian has discriminatingly marked passages in particular articles in every number; and, to use his own metaphor of a man's conversation being like an empty room which he has to furnish, these marked passages are the *fond d'ameublement* of my Mentor's conversation. "But," said Sebastian, "my room wants enrichment and originality," and he handed me a "Golden Treasury," and a well-known compilation of extracts from our national prose and poetry; both heavily marked. But Sebastian did not content himself with showing me over this well-stored arsenal of implements. He was kind enough to give me some practical hints as to their employment, and that in a way which delighted me from its gay wisdom.

In the first place, Sebastian warned me to let a full three months go by from the time of an article's appearance to the time of adapting either its thought, its images, or its expressions to my conversational uses. Indeed, as I think modestly, he attributes his own justly merited reputation of being an original and brilliant talker largely to this habit of self-restraint. In the second place, it seems that classicism and erudition are best avoided. They are out of repute. Besides which, the temper of the day is one of self-contemplation, and concerns itself with neither. In the third place, quotations, especially at any length, must be most guardedly resorted to, having in view this fact: that as the evening paper is out by one o'clock the aptest quotation must be a little behind time. I thought this quite neat. Sebastian only smiled, and showed me the original idea in a monthly review nearly a year old. He thinks that the source of a quotation, whether from prose or poetry, should never be given; it is better manners to usher in one's quotation with an easy "who, or some one, says;" no one then can feel stupid or ill-read. Sebastian then said, jokingly, although I did not quite see the joke, that as Plato's philosophy was cloudland to the average intelligence, smart society was enchanted by it; so that I must read up one or two things in a book called "Jowett." There was something he said too about Hobbes,

and all that sort of men, which I did not quite catch the drift of.

These practical hints, he thinks, and anything like ordinary luck, should help me to make a handsome beginning; and that with the addition of a few religious doubts, I may soon turn fearless somersaults in the smartest society. I thought this very vigorous, but he showed me the same idea in the current *Fortnightly* marked in violet ink for later use, the acrobat in the original being Mr. Robert Browning.

Well, the secret of Sebastian's system is now mine, at all events. I have only to get together my box of tricks, furbish up some implements, and get some tuff to work upon. Conversation may be a trade or a game, its art only artifice, its artists only handicraftsmen. It is possible that in these abundant days, conversation has only time to be, as Sebastian says, "le vernis de toutes choses." It may be that good conversation is merely the most nimble manipulation of other men's thoughts, the most tuncful arrangement of the most popular airs. It may all depend upon dexterity and opportunism, and yet I do not feel altogether confirmed that it is so, nor can I quite satisfy myself — the 4 to 7 cards notwithstanding — that Sebastian P. and his method have expressed the artist and the art of conversation; or that they have helped me to realize my impressions.

"There are many kinds of readers, and each has a sort of perusal suitable to his kind." There are also many kinds of talkers, each with the conversation of his kind. Sebastian P. is one kind, and understands what suits his kind. But a master of the art of conversation surely understands and suits all kinds? Mr. Bagehot's subtle reader — the passage occurs in the essay on Gibbon — pursues with a fine attention the most delicate and imperceptible ramifications of a topic, "marks slight traits, notes changing manners, is minutely attentive to every prejudice and awake to every passion, watches syllables and waits on words, is alive to the light airs of nice association which float about every subject — the motes in the bright sunbeam — the delicate gradations of the passing shadows."

Can Sebastian P. do all this? If he can, then Sebastian P. has the grand style of the art of conversation, and for a model I need look no further.

RIBBLESDALE.

From Blackwood's Magazine.  
FRENCH AND ENGLISH.

THE title of Mr. Hamerton's new book \* leads us to expect one of those pleasant collections of sketches which we naturally associate with his name, in which, amid charming pictures of life and landscape in midland France, all drawn with a most favorable pen, there will be an involuntary desire to celebrate the qualities of his new neighbors a little at our expense — but all so picturesquely and with so much grace, that we should be ill-natured indeed did we express any objections.

In the present case, however, Mr. Hamerton has not been so well inspired. His book is about France, and those characteristics which are so unlike our own that we find endless subjects in them for the pleasant surprise and admiration which so often distinguish the attitude of the English spectator towards our neighbor country. No doubt there are many who do not assume this attitude, but, on the contrary, one of prejudice and disgust; but yet we think a very large number of English visitors to France go there with a distinct inclination to be pleased, and concerning many things, a foregone determination to find that these things are done better in France. Mr. Hamerton, however, does not confine himself to a delineation of the rural world which he knows so well, and in which we are quite agreed as to his competency to give an opinion. His aim is a far more serious and important one, being nothing else than a close and minute comparison between the two nations in all their peculiarities, — a comparison slightly, perhaps unconsciously, to the disadvantage of his own country-folk. It requires a very steady hand indeed to keep the balance quite even in such a comparison, and Mr. Hamerton has that preference for his adopted country and friends which naturally comes from a personal choice of them — always more lively than the mere compulsory claim of birthright. In every particular of their daily existence, in habits and manners, in religion and politics, he pursues the parallel. This, it is evident, is a very different matter from sketches of life. It is not nearly so amusing, but it is a more important undertaking, and there is always an interest in seeing ourselves balanced against our neighbors, and clearing up those mists of national misunderstanding or mistake on both sides, which are

oft so ludicrous and sometimes arise so simply. We are all extremely conscious of the absurdities on the French side, which are very patent and apparently incorrigible by any instruction or experience; but we are not at all so well aware of the misconceptions on our own. We are indeed disposed to believe that we know a great deal better what French society is than any French critic knows what English society is. For instance, nobody in England makes or perseveres in making those mistakes about French titles and courtesy names which Frenchmen continually make in respect to us. Nothing like Sir Gladstone, or the quite incongruous and wild use of lord, which is habitual in France, ever occurs in England. It is true that French titles are simple, and there is not the elaborate system of noble names existing among our neighbors which mystify even the partially educated writer among ourselves, causing him perpetually to speak of Lord John and Lady Mary Smith as Lord Smith and Lady Smith, a solecism which is too shocking for words. We, on our side, sometimes generously add a *de* where no particule is, with no consciousness that we are thus conferring nobility. These mistakes are venial, but they are curious evidences of the unteachableness in such matters of the general mind, which goes on generation after generation, thus repeating mistakes which the very smallest amount of trouble would correct. The idea of each other which is conceived by the two most eminent and highly civilized of European nations, nearest in geographical position, most connected in history, with a close acquaintance, both in hate and in (comparative) love, which has lasted for many centuries — and on either side including a considerable number of individuals who admire with enthusiasm, study, copy, and exalt the other — is curiously deficient in exactness and reality. To be sure, even in differences of locality little affected by race, we find the curious problem of this inability to understand in full force even after the closest union. It has come to be a sort of absurd commonplace that nothing, for instance, will ever enable us, in this larger island, to understand Ireland. Nay, there remains between the English and Scotch, who are now virtually one nation, the most odd mutual failures of comprehension. But why need we go so far afield for examples, when even between the two halves of the human race, the companions who share bed and board, and every incident of life, there remains

\* French and English. By P. G. Hamerton. London: Macmillan & Co.

the same inconceivable failure of understanding, and men and women, after those thousands of years, continue inscrutable to each other? This great misunderstanding apparently will always subsist, and certainly it is the most incomprehensible of all.

Mr. Hamerton begins his contrast of the two peoples in the schoolroom, and continues it through all the national and domestic institutions, contrasting the culture of the affections in France with their repression in England, the different views of both peoples in respect to rank, their patriotism, their differing kinds of conservatism, their religion, and, in short, everything which deeply affects national character, with a very full knowledge of what we may call from an English point of view the other side of the question; but with not so clear a perception we think of ours, which perhaps he has partially forgotten, and with which, seeing his long inhabitation of another country, he probably, to begin with, was not entirely pleased. Here, however, is something like a statement of his theory as to the mutual judgment of the two nations, which he takes as explaining all their hard thoughts of each other, and which will show at once his position and its defects:—

I cannot conclude this chapter without frankly admitting that national jealousy is reasonable so long as it confines itself to the truth. It is quite reasonable that the French should want to push the English out of Canada and Egypt, and that the English should wish to sink the French fleet. What is unreasonable is for two peoples to depreciate each other in books and newspapers, and blacken each other's private characters because both are formidable in a military or naval sense. How is it that we hear so much of French immorality, and nothing, or next to nothing, of Italian? How is it that in France we have heard so much of English cruelty and barbarity, whilst the accounts of Turkish cruelty were received with the smile of incredulity or the shrug of indifference? Why this so tender French sympathy for the Irish, exaggerating all their woes? Why this wonderful sympathy in England for the unauthorized religious orders in France? How does it happen that everything which seems to tell against one of the two countries is received with instant credence in the other?

The explanation that it is patriotic jealousy which is the cause of all these misstatements and misapprehensions, is here, we think, not at all carried out by facts. That the French should wish "to push the English out of Egypt" is very com-

prehensible; it is an old ground of contention, and, however little we may like the perpetual rivalry, we can neither wonder at it nor find it unreasonable. As for Canada, that is unreasonable more because it is impossible than for any other cause; for certainly we should not at all on our side be content to leave a large section of our country-folk, obstinately tenacious of our language and ways, under French subjection if we could help it. But what Englishman wishes "to sink the French fleet"? We may desire that it should remain inferior to our own, or rather—what is at once a better and a more veracious way of stating the fact—that our own should be manifestly and indisputably superior to it, which is the most reasonable thing in the world; but to sink the French fleet, unless, indeed, we were engaged in deadly warfare, and its destruction or our own was the only alternative, is what nobody could for a moment either desire or think of, and would be a most serious injury to the world in general; and to place such a fantastic imaginary wish against the other two facts, both of them quite comprehensible, is a proof at once of the failure of Mr. Hamerton's argument, and a singular absence of material on our side for establishing the wished-for balance. As for the question why we should accuse the French of immorality and not the Italians, nothing can be more easy to answer. French books, and especially French works of fiction purporting to give a picture of French life and morals, are very much read in England. Italian books are not so. In themselves the latter are much less numerous and less attainable, so that we have not the material on which to form our judgment. And that the French should dwell much more on what they think English cruelty than on the cruelty of the Turks, is likewise the most comprehensible thing in the world. If we are cruel, we are much more guilty than the Turks. The Turks are unprogressive; they have not the same tenets as we have; their conscience is unaffected by the laws which dominate Western systems. There are persons, indeed, who maintain that the Mohammedan civilization is a more effective Christianity than our own; but these enlightened individuals have not yet succeeded in convincing the rest of the world that it is so, and we are all, French and English alike, united in believing that what is expected from the peoples in the front of civilization is not to be expected from the Oriental. It

seems hardly worth while to insist on facts so apparent.

Mr. Hamerton, however, is very strong in his reiterated protest against our general disposition to take French fiction as a just illustration of French morality and manners. He uses the somewhat extravagant argument that the English old maid reads all about the murders of the day, yet never murders anybody, as an excellent reason against accusing the French public of immorality because it delights in stories of vice. This, however, is not the question at all. Nobody denies that there exist in France the purest lives, the most admirable characters. Nobody now who knows anything about the matter believes, as once an ignorant generation believed, that because the French have not the word "home" the thing does not exist among them — a ridiculous misconception, which only ignorance could ever justify. At the same time, we know that our own novels are more or less truthful representations of the life of our time — many of them admirable, few of them seriously misleading. There are some, indeed, which represent life only as it exists among the frivolous classes, and these have naturally no breadth of truth, but yet are sufficiently faithful to the path of life which they portray. This being the case, we are not only justified in believing that French novels must be in their way a true expression of life, but driven to that conviction. In every other country they are accepted as such. The drama must deal with stronger effects than are necessary for a portrayal of life, being compelled to epitomize in the space of a few hours the entire growth and *développement* of a tragedy, or, what is even more difficult, of the genteel comedy, which approaches more closely to a novel. That we should distrust the existence of pure women in France because their novels are odious, or imagine that every Frenchwoman who reads "Madame Bovary" must necessarily share her inclinations or emulate her life, is absurdity; though at the same time not to have read "Madame Bovary" — a book the name of which must be forced upon her in a hundred critical discussions, which are the things French writers are most cunning and remarkable in — must be almost impossible for a cultivated Frenchwoman who is not a *jeune fille*. And this is put forth, recognized, applauded as a revelation — and no voice of authority, as far as we are aware, has ever said that it was not so. Some disclaimers, we are aware,

have arisen recently from the bosom of French society on this subject. The author of "Marie Fougère," who has written under various *noms de plume*, sometimes as a woman, but who is no less a personage than the present procureur de la république, has made a most energetic and animated protest, describing how in the country "toutes les honnêtes femmes sont effrayées, pour leur enfants comme pour elles mêmes, des tendances que manifeste de plus en plus l'école moderne. Paris nous a lancé comme dernier défi la *Terre et l'Immortel*: ceci est la réponse de la bourgeoisie lettrée de province." Alas! the *réponse* is but poorly qualified to maintain its place against the modern school thus objected to. It is like all French fiction, which resembles the immortal little girl of the distich: —

When she was good she was very, very good,  
And when she was bad she was horrid.

The very, very good is never the fit reply to vice. What we want is to see ordinary human nature upon that ordinary level of life which would be impossible if it were not at least tolerably virtuous. Of this fact we are fully convinced — that the reeking dunghill of French fiction cannot largely represent the common existence of France, or else France would inevitably fall to pieces. But at the same time this universal burden of story, this consent of living testimony, how is it possible to accept it as worth nothing? If by common agreement realism is understood to mean vice in a certain language and country, what can spectators say or believe? Nothing that Mr. Hamerton says is worth considering as an answer to this question. It is doubtful, indeed, as he announces on various occasions that he does not read French novels, how far he is a judge.

There are some very curious statements about life in England in this book, which lead us to the conclusion that Mr. Hamerton must have forgotten his native country in many ways. He tells us that the modern Englishman, for instance, is "taught and governed in boyhood by clergymen; their feminine allies compel him to go to church, and to observe the English Sunday if he intends to marry in England." The last is a most curious and entirely French suggestion; and it is rather a pity that it is not true. "Even a strong-minded Englishman is a little afraid of a clergyman," Mr. Hamerton adds. Another very curious statement is about



our language. "It is only the most cultivated English people who dare to employ in conversation the full powers of their noble tongue; the others shrink from the best use of it, and accustom themselves to forms of speech that constitute in reality a far inferior language, in which it is so difficult to express thought and sentiment that they are commonly left unexpressed." Mr. Hamerton adds, in a foot-note, "An English friend of mine, himself a man of the very highest culture, says that the cultivated English keep their talk down to a low level, from a dread of the watchful

jealousy of their intellectual inferiors. *They only dare venture to talk in their own way between themselves in privacy.*"

This is a very appalling statement indeed. Is it possible that the intellectual classes in England, after expressing or not expressing "in a far inferior language" such sentiments as it may be possible to trust to their intellectual inferiors, talk Johnsonese among themselves? How glad must everybody be in that case that he or she does not belong to these painfully "cultivated" people!

**MUSICAL OVERSTRAIN.**—The weariness of long-continued study is proverbial. Its explanation is not far to seek. One portion of our entire being is almost exclusively occupied, and the monotony of the process constitutes in large measure the cause of exhaustion. Relief must accordingly be sought in rest, in the exercise of other functions, or in variation of the form of mental exertion. Such timely and refreshing change enters into all well-ordered plans of education. There is, however, in every study a stage at which persistent concentration is indispensable to anything like high development. Reiteration, though tedious, is necessary to full instruction. Perhaps no better illustration of this fact could be found than that which is constantly evident in the cultivation of music. One could hardly conceive of anything more truly monotonous than a continuance of that tax of patience, piano-practice. No doubt inclination and in-born faculty may do much to create an interest, but the most enthusiastic learner will sometimes, notwithstanding, rebel against the exactions of musical cram. It has even been stated by a German observer that much of the nervous delicacy so common among girls is traceable to excessive diligence at the piano. There is more than a grain of truth in this observation. The limit of moderation, indeed, may not be capable of exact definition, for a longer or shorter period would naturally suit the need and capacity of different persons. One or two hours of practice, it is probable, would rarely prove excessive. When, however, six or eight hours are daily absorbed in repeating a humdrum series of manipulations, the wonder is that nature long endures the drudgery. Yet this is the common lot of many who aspire to skilful execution. The coveted perfection doubtless is often approximately reached, but the associated circumstance of nervous overstrain will suggest a

doubt whether such qualified excellence is altogether desirable. At all events, it is but reasonable to allow that proficiency so dearly purchased, is not, for young people of deficient nervous tone, a social necessity, especially if they be also void of any special artistic aptitude. Nay, even for those whose health and energy permit them to enjoy, if they choose, the privilege of musical hard labor, a frequent interlude of rest and recreation is no less needful than discreet.

Lancet.

**THE ADVANTAGES OF THE CONSCRIPTION IN FRANCE.**—The absolute unity of sentiment between the military and civil populations is a great compensation for the burden of universal service. Another is the increase of manliness and the improvement of national health. Of the reality of this improvement I cannot entertain a doubt, having myself frequently known young men who had gained greatly in strength and activity by their military service, and who felt and acknowledged the benefit. This is peculiarly valuable in France on account of the too close confinement of youths in the public schools. The universality of military service has been accompanied by a great increase in the number and activity of the gymnastic societies, and it has led to much military drill within the schools themselves. The sons of peasants acquire some education in the army, which is a valuable instrument for spreading a certain amount of elementary culture, and even more than that, through the regimental libraries. The sons of gentlemen, besides the benefit of physical exercise, are often stimulated by the hope of promotion to improve the education they already possess.

P. G. Hamerton, in "French and English,"  
Macmillan's Magazine.